

THE IMPORTANCE OF AND A CURRICULUM FOR TEACHING THE
SOCIAL PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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In Partial Fulfillment
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by
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ABSTRACT

The Importance Of And A Curriculum For Teaching
The Social Principles Of The United Methodist Church
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This study emphasizes the importance of the Social Principles in the United Methodist Church. Traditionally, United Methodists have a long history of involvement in social issues and in more recent years, also in ecological issues. Concern about human beings and the environment are becoming paramount as people become more aware of the interconnectedness of global society. More and more people are recognizing that activity in one social or ecological sphere on planet earth either positively or negatively effects another sphere of activity, and in numerous situations, the impact creates often harmful or fatal interference. Christians in this global society are called by God to be responsible citizens showing love and care for all of creation. For United Methodists, the Social Principles initiates a comprehensive, methodical introduction to the social and ecological issues in our global society. It is an extremely important, relevant document that United Methodists need to know about, contemplate, express concerns and have understanding.

A curriculum designed for United Methodists to study

the Social Principles is the method and is a major portion of this project. Included are a total of twelve, two-hour sessions for adults, two sessions for each community addressed in the Social Principles. There are Bible references that are an integral part of each session. Being the church and living as responsible Christians in the world is of utmost importance and is a goal for each meeting time. A great variety of experiential opportunities and learning techniques are included in the sessions to enhance personal growth, spiritual growth and an increasing awareness of our global society.

The results of this study presents background information that calls for an urgency for this type of study. It also provides a concrete, organized, creative curriculum piece for exposing members of the United Methodist Church to the social and ecological issues in our global society. It calls United Methodists to be responsible, committed Christians in a world of plenty and in a world of need, in a world of destruction and in a world of new creations.

Summary conclusions point toward a comprehensive view of our global society and insight into how Christians can minister responsibly and inclusively to all of creation. There is an urgency in understanding, learning about, and building up our interdependent global communities. Through broadening our knowledge academically, intuitively and spiritually, United Methodists become more informed, more responsible and more active Christians in the world.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The Problem

The problem is that a great majority of members in the United Methodist Church are not aware of nor familiar with the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church.

Importance of the Problem

The importance of the problem is that the church is a viable religious institution in the world today and as such must be about ministry to life as lived in community locally, nationally and globally. Since the beginnings of the United Methodist Church in the eighteenth century, the church has had a continual active role in social issues. John Wesley lived out a ministry to and with the poor and actively stood against the injustices in eighteenth century England. United Methodist oriented churches in the United States have a long history of addressing injustices such as child labor, unequal education, the evils of liquor, the cruel treatment of prisoners and so on. The roots of our Social Principles articulated in the 1984 Discipline show concern and action by the church since its very beginnings.¹ The United Methodist Church continues such responsible ministry in the world today.

¹ Ronald P. Patterson, ed., The Book of Discipline (Nashville: United Methodist Pub. House, 1984), pp.86-104.

As mentioned above, a numerous segment of the United Methodist Church membership is not aware of the inclusive, responsible, forthright positions formulated by the General Conference and stated in the Social Principles. Admittedly, many individuals and churches support or are involved in a mission and ministry kind of work. Experience shows, however, that many times this work is done by nonparticipatory support, that is, through donations of money or expendable items, not first hand experience or participation. This kind of outreach may be sporadic, fragmented, condescending and sometimes creates more problems than it solves. For example, by supporting one child in a very poor village in a foreign land when the same amount of money could be spent to greatly help the whole village. A local example may be helping a group raise money for the needy in the immediate community, but at the same time, turning away a starving family who knocks on the door. A viable ministry in the world must have an intentionality and responsibility to all peoples and to the whole earth and this is what the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church are about.

The church is the body of Christ, mandated to insure spiritual communion with God and to inspire and facilitate responsible ministry by all, in and to all of God's creation. To have faith requires responding to God's call individually and in community, and requires action in life as a response to that faith. Responsible, authentic leadership requires knowledge of and understanding of Biblical and church

traditions in the faith community. It also requires an awareness of and concern about the world in which we live with special attention and evaluation of our actions relative to what God is calling us to do. Leadership also requires helping others clarify and initiate an intimate, shared vision of God's call to us, the church. This is a tremendous responsibility and one that must be done in our churches today.

There are so many responsibilities that must be taken care of by clergy and lay members in the church that oftentimes there remains little time for curriculum design and preparation or research about ethical/social issues in our global society. A definite portion of this project addresses these specific issues and includes information that enhances and facilitates a disciplined, methodical study of the Social Principles. This will hopefully serve as a consciousness raiser as to the problems and issues so urgently facing our neighbors, our communities, our country and our global society today. Ideally, it will help individuals to be in touch with God's call, in the Bible, in the church community and in the world, to be stewards and trustees of God's creation.

This study will fill a void that presently exists in the United Methodist Church in that the church has succinctly stated principles in the Discipline but there is no specifically planned overview curriculum piece that facilitates a fully developed overview of the theological and biblical foundations for our position as United Methodists. Understanding

and being involved as a social being is the cry of the Gospel and the mandate for ministry. We have to bring to others the sense of urgency of the needs in the world and put our energies, money and power into working for a better world and compel others, in the experience of Christ, to do likewise.

The Thesis

The thesis of this project is that an intentional, systematic, twelve session overview of experiential and didactic study of the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church will build a stronger church community of ministry at the local church level.

Definition of Major Terms

The overview is designed to facilitate a perusal of the whole of the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church as adopted by the 1972 General Conference of the church and revised by the 1976, 1980, and 1984 General Conferences. The primary focus will be to include a portion of each of the communities addressed in the Social Principles and not to focus indepthly or specifically on one or only a part of the adopted principles. The natural world is considered the first community, followed by the nurturing, social, economic, political and world communities. The natural world is the world of God's creation that is physical and nonhuman. Of particular concern is a responsible life style that promotes a more ecologically just world and a better life for all of the world. This includes water, air, soil, animals, minerals, plants, energy resources and space. The nurturing community

concerns the strength and support of social climates that are positive for all humans. All individuals should be afforded the opportunity to be nurtured into the fullness of their humanity. Critical issues for study are the family, church or related groups, marriage, divorce, single persons, human sexuality, abortion and death with dignity. The social community addresses the different segments of peoples that are members of our global communities and affirmation is that all are equally valuable in the sight of God. Those having different values may be ethnics, children, religious minorities, youth, young adults, the elderly, women, handicapped people, rural inhabitants, and urban-suburban residents. Primary issues in the social community are world population, alcohol and other drugs and medical experimentation. The economic community seeks to address the responsibility of sound fiscal and monetary practices that would be beneficial to all human beings, both public and private. Particular issues include property ownership, collective bargaining, work and leisure, consumption, poverty, migrant workers and gambling. The political community is acknowledgement of the government in God's realm and the responsibilities thereof of providing basic freedoms, freedom of information, right to childhood education, human rights in civil issues, in crime and rehabilitation and in military service. Emphasis is also on the individual and being led by the Holy Spirit; as secondary but most important is being a responsible citizen of the political community. The world community seeks to

achieve a community that is a fellowship of persons who honestly love each other and seek to find the meaning of the gospel in all issues that divide people. Of particular concern are cultural differences, power, war, injustices, exploitation, the ecological crisis, nuclear weapons, and transnational business.

In this project, "study" is an intentionally planned time for a small group of people (approximately 10-14) to work and interact with each other for the purpose of becoming more aware of self and the world in which one lives. The time together is to be facilitated by a designated clergy or lay leader in following the session plans as designed and included in this project. This calls for twelve meetings of two hours each session; thus, approximately four hours of study will be spent on each topical community included in the Social Principles. The primary method of study will be that of participation by all individuals in small groups of two, three or four and also by sharing and working together as a whole group. Different techniques will be utilized to facilitate the growth of understanding about the world in which we live.

The Social Principles refers specifically to Part III, paragraphs seventy to seventy-six of the 1984 Discipline of the United Methodist Church.² Included is also a preface, a preamble and our social creed. The following paragraph

² Ibid.

most explicitly describes the principles:

The Social Principles are a prayerful and thoughtful effort on the part of the General Conference to speak to the human issues in the contemporary world from a sound biblical and theological foundation as historically demonstrated in United Methodist traditions. They are intended to be instructive and persuasive in the best of the prophetic spirit. The Social Principles are a call to all members of the United Methodist Church to a prayerful, studied dialogue of faith and practice.³

The United Methodist Church has over 40,000 congregations in the United States and supports over 150 colleges and seminaries and 1500 missionaries in the world. From its very beginnings in the eighteenth century, this church has had concern in and action involved in social justice issues. The United Methodist Church is a doctrinal church looking to historic documents as important landmarks in the tradition and as a call to be an effective evangelical, ecumenical, and reformed church in the world today. The church suggests two mandatory interacting general principles for the church in the world today, that of accountability and support.⁴ These two factors must continually act to bring reconciliation in Christ with each other and in the world. The United Methodist Church as a viable institution in the world community will be an intentional inclusion in each of the class sessions. The church community is a place, a community and a culture. To be a part of God's world, the church is

³ Ibid., p. 86.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 40-54.

called to know about, to witness to and minister to and with each of the communities addressed in the Social Principles. Knowing more about the traditions and work of the United Methodist Church strengthens all who profess to be United Methodist.

Work Previously Done in the Field

Work previously done in the field includes some specific work on the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church. A pamphlet is available for a small fee which lists the Social Principles, the preface, the preamble and creed as published in the Discipline with the same being available in Spanish and Korean.⁵ There is also a Study Supplement to the Social Principles available that briefly lists the categories, biblical and theological foundations, selected issues, a historical outline and suggested study design.⁶ There are three audio visual resources available.

1. There is a thirty-five minute, two-part color, teaching videotape featuring Bishop James S. Thomas, chairperson of the former Social Principles Study Commission (1968-72), who discusses biblical/theological foundations and

⁵ United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society, Social Principles of the United Methodist Church, Discipleship Resources for Church and Society (Nashville: United Methodist Pub. House, 1985).

⁶ United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society, Study Supplement to the Social Principles, Discipleship Resources for Church and Society (Nashville: United Methodist Pub. House, 1985).

answers frequently asked questions about issues relative to the Social Principles.⁷

2. There is a twelve minute, 112-frame color film-strip with cassette tape designed to stimulate discussion about the Christian faith and United Methodist witness and to help persons understand the theological/biblical foundations of the Social Principles; this is available in English, Spanish and Korean.⁸

3. There is a ninety-seven frame filmstrip with cassette tape which shows Christians at work in the United States, living out the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church; locations include a New Jersey farm, a food stamp line in Nashville, the mayor's office in Lincoln, and a Chicago slum; all are a channel for God's work in the world.⁹

In addition to these, there is a Faith Meets Life adult curriculum series based on issues raised in the Social Principles.¹⁰ Each curriculum piece is designed to cover twelve weeks of study and there are six, twelve-week studies. The eighteen topics included in these six study booklets are:

⁷ The Social Principles, with Bishop James S. Thomas, videotape, United Methodist Church, 1985.

⁸ From these Roots: The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church, filmstrip, United Methodist Church, 1982.

⁹ Created in God's Image, filmstrip, United Methodist Church, 1977.

¹⁰ Faith Meets Life, United Methodist Curriculum Series (Nashville: Cokesbury Service Center, 1983).

Basic Freedoms, Alcohol and Other Drugs, Rights of the Aging, Rights of Children, Energy Resources Utilization, Crime and Rehabilitation, Rights and Responsibilities in a Consumer Society, Gambling, Death with Dignity, Political Responsibility, War and Peace, Abortion, Marriage and Divorce, Property, Rights of Ethnic Minorities, Education, Rights of Women and National Power and Responsibility.

Another important resource is the Book of Resolutions which also includes a copy of the Social Principles in addition to resolutions approved by the General Conferences since 1968.¹¹ The resolutions state the policy of the United Methodist Church on some of the current social issues and concerns.

Scope and Limitations of the Project

The purpose of this project is to provide an overview of the whole statement of the Social Principles. The intent would be to include, if possible, one or more of the audio visuals and to synthesize the information written on specific issues to make one twelve-week overview study series possible. One major goal would be to support a method of presenting controversial issues in such a manner so as to continue to promote and affirm pluralistic inclusiveness. A second important goal is to design a meaningful study series that could be used without costly resources, since stewardship of funds is so vitally important for the church. Lastly, as mentioned in the thesis, both experiential activities and didactic learnings will be included to build community in the fellowship

¹¹ United Methodist Church, Book of Resolutions (Nashville: United Methodist Pub. House, 1984).

of Christ's spirit as well as learning together the connectedness and necessity of being in fellowship with all of God's creation.

This project is limited to substantiating and designing a twelve-week session overview study unit on the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church. Of importance will be techniques that enhance educational enrichment, activities that lend themselves to the promotion of openness and understanding of the unknown, and of those individuals who are different in ones own immediate environment. Also of importance will be to provide a sound biblical and theological foundation including scripture, experience, reason and tradition that leads to an urgency of being a responsible, integral part of God's total creation.

There will be two sessions on each of the following topics: the natural world, the nurturing community, the social community, the economic community and the political community. The responsibility of the church, as responding to God's call, will be a vital part of each session. In addition to a detailed two-hour planned session for each meeting, a brief bibliography of related materials will be included for further study in each session. The study will be designed to encourage commitment by the participants to attend at least ten of the twelve sessions and to spend a recommended minimum of one hour outside study or participatory activity. This would include the Bible, biblical or socially orientated materials provided in the study or an

outgrowth of the social communities being studied. Some options will be suggested relative to church size, community size and availability/nonavailability of resources. It is recommended that perhaps this be an undated study for a quarter of adult studies or twelve weekly evening sessions.

It will not be the intention of this study to provide reference to all the materials in the area of social justice/injustice nor to do a thorough study of each issue. It will be an overview study of the Social Principles from an ethical, biblical and theological perspective that will hopefully promote understanding of and compassion for the social issues of which our church is vitally concerned.

Procedure for Integration

The sessions of study will be designed with a balance of theological and functional disciplines in that both may be identified from the other and that both may permeate, support and add cumulative understanding and learning. Professional educational resources, human behavioral techniques and library research will be studied for possible inclusion in the sessions and this project.

Some of the Faith Meets Life studies that have successfully dealt with social issues will be carefully examined. A twelve-week study entitled An Experiment in Practical Christianity by John and Adrienne Carr, a study of the book of Mark including concurrent practical activities in being the church, has been most successful in many

churches.¹² Another study entitled Power and Light Company has been written by the Carrs.¹³ A study of peace entitled Shalom is an excellent study of a similar nature.¹⁴

The chapter outline for this project is as follows:

Chapter 1, Introduction, is an overview of the problem, the need and purpose for the study, work done in the field and a general description of materials to be included.

Chapter 2, The Social Principles, examines the history of the document that exists today, the importance of social issues in our world and the relationship of the church to social issues.

Chapter 3, The Pedagogical Task, primarily addresses the process of education in educating for change, for character formation and for social awareness.

Chapter 4, includes the introduction of sessions and specific plans, with situational options, that address the natural world, the nurturing community, the social community, the economic, political and world communities while at the same time regenerating and incorporating the participants into a viable church community.

¹²John Carr and Adrienne Carr, An Experiment in Practical Christianity, Discipleship Resources (Nashville: United Methodist Pub. House, 1985.)

¹³John Carr and Adrienne Carr, The Power and Light Company, Discipleship Resources (Nashville: United Methodist Pub. House, 1976).

¹⁴United Methodist Church, Task Force on Christian Education for World Peace, Shalom: Teaching Toward a Faithful Vision, Discipleship Resources (Nashville: United Methodist Pub. House, 1977).

Chapter 5, Summary and Conclusion, includes a synthesis of the problem as related to the rationale of the document, the methodology and the intentionality of evoking growth in being a United Methodist in the world today and gives suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2

The Social Principles

History

The very beginnings of United Methodism evidence a strong concern for social principles, for spirituality and for experiential faith events. Knight of the Burning Heart bears witness to these during the formation of the Wesleyan movement in the 1740's in England.¹ At that time Charles Wesley was writing hymns prolifically, John Wesley preached, however he was finding that church doors in England were being closed to his preaching. At a meeting held on Aldersgate Street, John personally felt Christ move in his heart and from that point on, he felt a burning desire to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to all the world.

Since church doors were closed to John, he joined one of his friends, George Whitefield and began preaching out in the countryside. John didn't like the idea of field preaching at first. However, thousands of people came to hear John's powerful messages about Christ. He also used the meaningful songs his brother Charles had written. A spiritual revolution was being formed by John Wesley in England! People were fired with new enthusiasm born of the

¹ Leslie F. Church, Knight of the Burning Heart (Nashville: Abingdon, 1940).

tremendous conviction that God cared, this was causing people to feel very good about themselves, their neighbors and their country. It was becoming more evident to John that personal salvation must precede social redemption. Many individuals, rich and poor alike were seeing a new vision of the Kingdom of God and after that were beginning to help others. They reformed prisons, stopped slave trade, sent missionaries to teach and preach the Gospel, created hospitals and made converts aware of wrong social conditions.

John's field preaching was so successful that buildings were built for the congregations in England, Scotland and Ireland; many classes were formed and he began the process of establishing lay leadership in the church. Because John Wesley and many of his colleagues were so methodical and ordered in their life, this great religious movement was called Methodist. By 1784, there were 359 Methodist chapels. At that time, John Wesley appointed 100 preachers as legally constituting the Conference to hold the chapels in trust and to appoint ministers. Also in 1784, Wesley accepted the responsibility of ordination and consecrated as bishops Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury to superintend the Methodist Church in America.

John Wesley's later years were filled with many hard tasks to do. He preached to many people, probably traveling over 250,000 miles by horseback, boat and by horse and buggy. When he died at age 88, the church had about 175,000 members and 630 lay preachers. John's brother, Charles perhaps wrote

more than 6,000 hymns, of which seventy-six are included in our United Methodist hymnal today.

It was this same fervor of spirituality, concern for social principles and experiential faith that initiated and rapidly developed the Wesleyan movement in the United States. In 1784, the Methodist Episcopal Church in America was organized and immediately adopted a stance opposing slavery. Norwood discusses the schisms in the church resulting from the slavery issue but reports an optimism which fed on new social philosophies in the Methodist Episcopal Church which grew in membership from about two-thirds of a million in 1850 to almost three million in 1900.² He also points up social issues that are important in the church at this time such as temperance, women's rights, economic morality, human rights, issues resulting from the industrial revolution and the social gospel movement.³ By the General Conference in 1900, individuals were calling for a new awareness and a new commitment to social principles in the church. From a Methodist Federation for Social Service formed in 1907, came a Social Creed of Methodism adopted at the 1908 General Conference (Methodist Episcopal North). The document states the church making stands for equal rights and justice for all men, the right of arbitration in industrial conflict,

² Frederick A. Norwood, The Story of American Methodism (Nashville: Abingdon, 1974), p. 254.

³ Ibid., pp. 341-405.

the physical protection of industrial workers, the abolition of child labor, better conditions of labor for women, abolition of the "sweat" system, reasonable work hours for employees and leisure time for all, at least one day off per week, appropriate wages, equitable division of products and recognition of the Golden Rule and having the mind of Christ as being the supreme law of society.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South adopted the creed in 1914 and the Methodist Protestant Church in 1916. The principles served as a basis for later social legislation such as work hours, social security, work compensation, unionization, insurance and retirement. Social issues such as the challenges of industrialization, justice, regulation of the economy and large corporate structure were addressed at general conferences. Stimulated by the Depression and the social gospel movement, the Social Creed was expanded to include some of the implications for industry, agriculture, international relations and race relations. In 1934, the Evangelical United Brethren Church adopted a nine-point Social Creed and in 1938 a Board of Christian Social Action was established. The Social Principles have evolved from the Social Creed of the Methodist Church (formed in 1939) and the Basic Beliefs and Moral Principles (1946) of the Evangelical United Brethren Church. A study commission was established following the union of the two churches in 1968, to develop a statement for the United Methodist Church. After holding hearings in local churches and much research,

this body reported to the 1972 General Conference which adopted the Social Principles. These were again revised in 1976, 1980 and 1984 by those General Conferences.

Significance of the Social Principles Today

The Social Principles are a framework for which the United Methodist Church speaks today to the human and ecological issues in the contemporary world. They are a product of the church and are based on historical traditions in the denomination, Biblical and theological foundations, and ethical determinations based on modern day society. The churches attempt to keep the Principles relevant is evidenced by the changes that have been made at General Conferences as they have met over the last several decades. They serve as a guideline for United Methodists who have a personal faith in Jesus Christ to live a life that supports and enhances all of God's creation. In speaking of the Social Principles, Bishop Tuell writes "the entire document makes clear the United Methodist conviction that the gospel is by its very nature 'social,' and must include this dimension if it is to be true to its Lord."⁴

Category I, The Natural World, acknowledges all of God's creation in the natural world that is non-human. We as United Methodists are called to be responsible for how we use creation and to promote what is right and what is just

⁴ Jack M. Tuell, The Organization of the United Methodist Church (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), p. 40.

ecologically so that all creation will have a better quality of life. God's call in the creation story in Genesis is to dress, till and keep the earth, not to conquer it and make it conform to personal human desire and gain. Following are some urgent needs in the natural world and some solutions and suggestions to replenish God's creation.

Lowdermilk⁵ discusses how the land as a natural resource has been greatly abused over the centuries causing another big problem on our earth. He states that we must move from "an economy of exploitation into an economy of conservation" and feels strongly that necessity for food is the most basic need in the world.⁶ Lowdermilk found in his study that there is much degradation in the land all over the earth. Eckholm supports this evaluation. Land degradation has been caused by overgrazing, by turning natural grassland into cultivated lands, by cutting down or burning forests or parts of forests, by cultivating hilly land improperly, and by destroying indigenous vegetation.⁷ In many locations in the world we find that as a result of this misuse, a great amount of top-soil being washed away or blown away by the wind, growth of noxious weeds and loss of land productivity because of no natural restoration or destruction of soil from inept

⁵ W. C. Lowdermilk, Conquest of the Land Through 7,000 Years (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1975).

⁶ Ibid., pp. 1-28.

⁷ Erik P. Eckholm, Down to Earth: Environment and Human Needs (New York: Norton, 1982), pp. 172-88.

water applications.⁸ The topsoil is our prime means of growing food and when it is gone, civilizations cease existence. This is urgency! With the large population of our world today, there is no more new land that humankind can afford to abuse and we have to begin to conserve rather than destroy the land. There are ways of conserving the land and in the reading, Lowdermilk cites successful uses of terraces, contour planting and plowing, livestock grazing control, conserving rainfall and building rock walls. He even cites how sand dunes have been reclaimed in France and the ocean floor reclaimed in Holland for utilization as farmland. The topsoil that is washed away into rivers also causes problems in drainage; this can also be helped by proper land and water conservation. The United Nations Environment Programme is also working to improve land and they have done or do the following: "Completed worldwide maps of soils potentials and degradation, support improved data-gathering, and publicize critical problems and possible responses."⁹

The middle of the last half of the twentieth century is described by Brown as the golden age of the oil industry.¹⁰ He notes that economic growth was greatly enhanced by the oil production in the auto industry, in agriculture (fertilizer),

⁸ Ibid., p. 141.

⁹ Ibid., p. 139.

¹⁰ Lester R. Brown, Population Policies for a New Economic Era, Worldwatch Paper, No. 53 (Washington, D.C.: Worldwatch Institute, 1983), pp. 1-45.

in the production of synthetic fibers and in other commercial activities. Brown makes a strong case for the unfortunate abuses of this golden age including the depletion of natural resources, wasteful use of resources, the tentative usage of products, the unfair distribution of resources and the failure to address the issues of human need. Brown suggests that a shift to slower long-term economic growth is inevitable and this will cause great problems on the earth, in view of our rapidly expanding population. He suggests renewable resources, solar energy and renewable energy transition as possible solutions and lifts up that moral resources will have to be of prime consideration in the future vision of our world.¹¹

When considering the care of our earth, another vital part is the ocean which comprises about 70% of the earth's surface. Pollution, habitat interference, toxic chemicals, the plight of the whales and non-governmental action have been adding to the problems of the preservation of our oceans, however, "overfishing has been by far the major threat to global fisheries up to now."¹² A few efforts have been made particularly in the Mediterranean Sea area, however "few systematic efforts have been made to add up the economic costs of pollution and other human activities that destroy fisheries."¹³ Eckholm states that there is a common challenge

¹¹ Ibid., p. 27.

¹² Eckholm, p. 72.

¹³ Ibid., p. 86.

in that nations need to move beyond platitudes to commitments of resources to deal with the endangered oceans on a scale that will make a difference.

Pollution of our air, lakes, rivers and streams has been caused by the rapid technological development and with few questions being posed regarding consequences. The burning and utilization of fossil fuels without discretion has added an enormous amount of toxic air borne substances and the rise in carbon is seriously endangering our atmosphere. Most scientists strongly feel this could effect climatic conditions of our whole earth. The result of visible smog and polluted water has prompted few successful attempts by nations and communities, however, because of more evidence of destruction a few more corrective measures are being taken. Water pollution caused by sewage pipes and factories is better but "run-off from farmlands, which tends to carry fertilizers, pesticides, and organic matter, and also that from urban areas, which often carries oil, metals, and other pollutants, remains largely uncontrolled and is on the increase in most countries."¹⁴ Acid rain which does not recognize boundaries is killing off wildlife in hundreds of lakes. Atomic energy production has been "rushed into use before even one permanent disposal site for its wastes has been chosen."¹⁵ Toxic substances are very

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 98-99.

¹⁵ Adam Finnerty, World Citizen: Action for Global Justice (New York: Orbis, 1982), p. 39.

difficult to control and expose the living by a variety of ways causing acute and chronic affects that are both immediate and delayed. Eckholm states that "sensible pollution control faces inherent political and analytical difficulties" and the desirability of which must be one reflecting value choice. He goes on to affirm that "cooperative international action is the only way to avoid the health and ecological damages of stratospheric ozone depletion."¹⁶

Eckholm and Finnerty both discuss the work of the United Nations in addressing the issues of degradation of our earth and the people and list agencies established that are working in various areas of injustice. Finnerty also includes in his book a compilation of private groups and agencies that are working in the areas of degradation/injustice. Both support the fact that this is a human problem and that all peoples must work together in recognizing the problems and working together at local, national and international levels for solutions. Resolutions approved by the General Conferences stating the policy for the United Methodist Church on some of the current social issues and concerns are printed in the 1984 Book of Resolutions. Of particular relevance to this category is a section on "Environmental Stewardship" (pp. 332-339) and a "Foundation Statement for Christian Stewardship" (pp. 345-348). Resolutions are representative of the six categories in the Social Principles. The whole document

¹⁶ Eckholm, pp. 102-126.

is indicative of a prayerful and thoughtful effort representing a general consensus concerning current social issues and concerns in our global society. When perusing the Social Principles, it is important to note that they are a statement; they are not designed to cover all issues and concerns nor to provide indepth statistical research data or study material. They are a call to all United Methodists to be in conversation, to be in study and to be in prayer about our faith and our practice in the world.

Category II, The Nurturing Community, calls us to help all individuals to reach their fullest potential. Human beings were created in the image of God to have an exalted position in all of creation. The exalted position of human beings means that individuals have unique capacities, a mind, a memory, a will, emotions, rationality and morality. Through the divinely ordained institution of marriage, human beings are called to participate in an ongoing creative venture with God. This creative venture is not only limited to human reproduction. Evidence abounds in society as well as in this particular project that human beings can work with God to create and re-create or human beings can work against God to bring forth destruction, desolation and even extinction. United Methodists see Jesus Christ as God's ultimate personal revelation and that between God and humans there is real interaction. "God's initiative cannot be fulfilled until

decisive human response is activated."¹⁷

The nurturing community is where people experience a greater sense of harmony. To bring this about, individuals need to have a greater knowledge about self and about others. Building greater unity comes from being aware of the barriers that divide people into groupings. Barriers may be previous expectations, learned behaviors, nonacceptance of bad/good times or another's feelings, misunderstandings between people poor or little communication, and inability to make and keep agreements, to name a few. Good, clear communication is very important in a nurturing community. Sharing experiences such as a journey of faith, a life history, a recent vacation, can help individuals begin to build community. Group problem solving that helps people understand and express feelings also facilitates in building a nurturing community. See the following and other related issues in The Book of Resolutions: "The Christian Family--Becoming Transformed and Transforming," page 290; "Statement on Aging for the United States of America," page 412; "Responsible Parenthood," page 91; and "Human Sexuality Study Document," page 201.

The church is a community of all true believers and we believe the family to be the basic human community for nurturing love, responsibility, respect and fidelity.¹⁸ The

¹⁷United Methodist Church, Book of Discipline, par. 69, p. 76.

¹⁸Ibid., par. 71, p. 89.

point is made very clear that "family" is a type of relationship between and among a small group of individuals who share life together, not necessarily a specific group such as the nuclear family. In this "type" of family group individuals should feel welcomed and accepted for who they are as a person. Laughing with one another, listening with respect to one another, forgiving one another and supporting one another are all important aspects in such a small group. Family ministry is a vital part of the United Methodist Church; see The Book of Discipline, paragraphs 258, 259.2, 263.4, 263.5, 264.4, 1219 and 1220.

Category III, the Social Community, calls us to recognize that as United Methodists, we are a part of the whole human community and that we have a responsibility to work toward the acceptance of all human beings into that community. Each individual person is valuable and that value needs to be known and elevated in the sight of all. There is a history of social injustice in our world that "occurs within a society, and between various social groupings."¹⁹ Some are in the forms of racism, religious persecution, age discriminations, sexism, handicapping conditions, substance abuse, different lifestyles and medical experimentation; some forms are so subtle that they are not recognized until victims speak out. Social injustice has a multitude of root causes: political control, power, wealth, military control, physical characteristics,

¹⁹ Finnerty, p. 61.

belief systems, nationalism, birth status and so on. This kind of injustice may be as local as arising out of cultural tradition and is many times intricately integrated into other degradation issues, such as gathering firewood and firewood scarcity.²⁰ Social injustice and destroying our earth are both contributors to a younger death rate, psychological and physical problems of human beings.

The history of the church has included many individuals who have stood as witnesses to justice in human society. Ambrose, a fourth century bishop, portrayed a need to serve the poor; morality, trust and respect were of high regard in his administration. As a ruler he was looked upon as a "soldier of God" and felt it his duty to protect the church and he was committed to the divine commandments in his political activities.²¹ Ambrose was against semitism, and murder and conveyed an utmost respect for religion. Las Casas, the first priest ordained in the New World, spoke to the "magnitude of the crime committed by those who have maltreated the Indians by robberies, massacres, and other incredible misfortunes of war" and struggled to bring about legal justice for the Indians.²² Also the equal rights of women has been addressed for a number of centuries throughout the history of the church. Calvin stated that the problem of subordination of women was

²⁰ Eckholm, p. 171.

²¹ Hans Lietzmann, The Era of the Church Fathers (London: Lutterworth, 1953), p. 77.

²² Stafford Poole, In Defense of the Indians (DeKalb: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 1974), p. 22.

a human problem, not a divine problem! In a fifteenth century writing, a male medical doctor wrote that the only difference between man and woman is physical; he continued stating men and women were equally endowed with the gifts of spirit, reason and the use of words.²³ Church history shows that the fundamental authority for justice in the church is God and the word of God; trust must be in people and people must gain a knowledge and understanding of particular human situations of oppression in society.

A serious problem in American society is racism. Hough feels that the white church today is the most segregated institution in American society and this fact causes a serious problem when the church tries to minister in a global world.²⁴ Racism exists in any attitude or action done by a person, group, institution or society which is forced against or discriminates against other persons purely on the basis of identity with a racial or cultural group. America was founded as a country that denied humanity to segments of people and continues to exist participating in this same kind of social structure. Racism functions in two ways, prejudice (negative attitudes) and discrimination (power structure, policies and practices). An illusion that exists is that most people think racism is a problem of those being denied humanity, however it is truly those who are unjust that really have the

²³ Agrippa Von Nettesheim, Not in God's Image, ed. Julia O'Faolain and Lauro Martines (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 184.

²⁴ Joseph Hough, Black Power and White Protestants (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968), pp. 129, 210.

problem. Some other limitations to solving the racism problem are the ingrained patterns of segregation, the persistence of theological individualism, localism and personal piety, the middle class syndrome and pressures of organizations in America.²⁵

When viewing human justice in the gospel there are socio-political ideas that are significant in the issue of racism. There is a radical individualism (God is with each person), a radical universalism (God comes to all in grace), all people are related to God equally and all people have the freedom to respond to God equally.²⁶ This informs us of the content of justice and allows us to know that Christian love can motivate us to justice. Enlightened faith gives the possibility for a new order and a new moral stance. A new inclusive society must require repentance, must be one that listens and must be one that is realistic.²⁷ The church has two important tasks and these are to identify racism as a real, vital problem in American society and to work politically against the racism that is sustained as a system; racism is an American problem which permeates our whole society.

Sexism is another problem in American churches today. There are separate issues that reinforce the sexism issue and

²⁵ Ibid., p. 171.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 153-155.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 213.

at the same time, they are all interrelated. Theological concepts are identified with white, male theologians. Language prejudices of white male dominance are used overtly or in subtle ways to put women down. Leadership styles and roles in churches are very often different for males and for females, for example women have personal power but men have position power. Sexist language, almost exclusively masculine, is used in much of the worship materials. In literalization, men are identified with having the qualities of mind, thinking, practical/political, divine reality and human life. Women are identified with body, feeling, mystical, natural world and non-human life. Ruether states that women have become a chimera without substance, a projection of what men are not and an "amalgam of the contradictions of man."²⁸ Barth's theology focuses mainly on the structures of authority of domination and of authority in the church using almost exclusively male images for authority figures.²⁹ Tillich's concern is to discover unity and wholeness of reason by overcoming the crippling dichotomies of culture and the human situation of estrangement; Tillich does not differentiate between males and females.³⁰ Elizondo discusses the history of women's injustice and repression in church history by lifting up

²⁸ Rosemary Ruether, ed., Religion and Sexism (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), p. 12.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 321-329.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 329-339.

designated offices, leadership roles and roles of power that are designated for males and those "left" for females.³¹ This is done from a Biblical perspective, a church history perspective and by examining current issues facing the church today. Some very degrading situations are discussed regarding the roles of women. Carrol states there is hope for correction of this injustice when the male domination as a sinful human structure is recognized and when more successes of women and men in altering personal and social relationships are achieved.³² Patriarchalizing in the Biblical text must be recognized and dealt with and non-sexist liturgy must be developed and used. Also we need to seek ways to change the patriarchal structures in the church today. The sexism issue is a whole perspective, a calling to justice and to just participation.

There exists in our social community segregation and sometimes abuse because of age. This is particularly true of the elderly, children and young persons. Also some are discriminated against because of the kind of work they do or because of a particular location in which they live. It is only when we become more aware of our society, both historically and in view of current development and practices can we begin to work toward a more just society for all.

³¹ Virgil Elizondo and Norbert Greinacher, eds., Women in a Men's Church (New York: Seabury, 1980), pp. 1-25, 43-59.

³² Ibid., p. 48.

Category IV, The Economic Community, calls for economic justice in our country and world. Specific areas of concern include sound fiscal and monetary policies, adequate employment and income, ecological responsibility in using the earth's resources, a sharing of the economic wealth and opposition to those practices that victimize human beings in our economic community. We believe individuals should hold human life sacred and inviolable and that is also the responsibility of the government to uphold the dignity and self-worth of each individual human being. The government should reflect commonly held values which regulate individual conduct. We believe that hard work and commitment should be the keys to gaining rewards in our society. "Methodists have always been strictly enjoined never to divorce faith from good works."³³

There are four Biblical images of justice, the connectional point for these being that God "walks" on the earth and that we should walk with and serve with God. The first arena is the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament where justice is called for by God among the Hebrew people and among other nations of the earth. The second is an apocalyptic cry that God will intervene and make things right. The third is with Jesus and Luke in portraying actions that minister to the poor, the hungry, the afflicted and that speak to unjust situations. The last is Paul and with building the Christian community and calling individuals to justice in that community.

³³ Book of Discipline, par. 67, p. 51.

Righteousness as seen in the New Testament presumes a covenant between humankind and their obedience to God and by God and God's saving act in Christ.³⁴ Kasemann states that this gift of righteousness "sets our feet upon the road."³⁵ He continues by reiterating that fact that God's presence is in the world and that humankind's call is to obedience to God. Kasemann closes by stating each Christian has their own particular service to render in response to their calling;³⁶ the church is currently looked upon with a unified perspective defined as the response of faith in the every day life of the world. This faith is response to the call of grace by which the world is being grasped and held. Cassidy speaks to the different kinds of ministry of Jesus and emphasizes the universalism that is a striking feature of Jesus' social stance.³⁷ An important theme of Jesus is inclusive community; he was always concerned for the poor, giving to them and including them as full participating members of the community.³⁸

Justice in the economic community is the call for us as Christians in the world today. We have to remember that the

³⁴P. J. Achtemeier, "Righteousness in the New Testament" in Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 4. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982), pp. 91-99.

³⁵Ernst Kasemann, New Testament Questions of Today (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), p. 170.

³⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 194-195.

³⁷Richard J. Cassidy, Jesus, Politics, and Society (New York: Orbis, 1978), p. 24.

³⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

gifts of creation belong only to God and that we are here as temporary stewards to give of ourselves to God and to others in the created universe.

Category V, The Political Community, calls us to be aware, informed, and responsible citizens. We see the government as separate from the church and as the principle means for ordering our society. We believe the church should have a strong ethical influence upon the policies, practices and procedures of the governmental bodies. For it is these bodies that are the patterns and institutions that organize and decide to a large degree the collective life of society. Some of these are, for example, educational institutions, laws, criminal systems, military service, basic freedoms and responsible citizenry. The church rejoices in our system of democracy and encourages full participation by all people.

Christians share a common bond that recognizes the dignity and right of each individual in the structures of the political community. However, "churches should not assume that any particular social pattern, political order, or economic ideology represents a complete embodiment of the Christian ethic."³⁹ The call for Christians is to do what is just and what is right (Mark 9:35; John 13:13-14; Matt. 25:31-40; Luke 4:18-19; Deut. 15:7-8, 10-11; Lev. 19:9-10; Ps. 145:13b-20; Ps. 146:7-9; Deut. 24:14-15, 22; Mic. 6:8; Prov. 21:13). More information related to the United Methodist Church and the political

³⁹Book of Resolutions, p. 133.

community is found in "The United Methodist Church and Church-Government Relations" and "Church/Government Relations".⁴⁰ Other related articles to the political community may also be found in the Book of Resolutions.

Category VI, The World Community, calls us to be citizens that are a part of and concerned about our global community. The technological revolution has greatly increased our abilities as a people to destroy or to build a better place for all inhabitants of planet earth. There are cosmic dimensions of God's saving love and humankind is a vital part in the continuation of God's creative activity upon the earth. In Genesis it states that humankind has the following responsibilities: to replenish the earth, to tame the earth, to manage the earth and to till and keep it (Gen. 1:28, 2:15). To the Hebrews, God acting in the historical process was to save and redeem God's whole creation and restore it to the intent which he had for it at the beginning of time.

For you shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace;
the mountains and the hills before you
shall break forth into singing,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;
and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial,
for an everlasting sign which shall not be cut off.
(Isa. 55:12-13)

The Old Testament prophet persistently intoned the truth that an alteration in Israel's relationship with the creator would invariably affect its relationship to the created world.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 36-40, 116-134.

"Hear the word of the Lord, O people of Israel;
 for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of
 the land.
 There is no faithfulness or kindness,
 and no knowledge of God in the land;
 there is swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and committing
 adultery;
 they break all bounds and murder follows murder.
 Therefore the land mourns, and all who dwell in it languish,
 and also the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air;
 and even the fish of the sea are taken away."
 (Hos. 4:1-3)

Jesus also spoke to coming to save the whole world (John 12:47)
 and he gave many examples of human interactions with brothers
 and sisters, neighbors, strangers, for caring for the poor
 and mistreated, for what is just and what is right and more.

Two of the biggest contributors to current problems on
 our earth are colonialism and neocolonialism. Finnerty des-
 cribes colonialism as existing from 1500-1945; and he goes on
 to say that, through this process, a few ruling countries sys-
 tematically distorted the economy and politics of most coun-
 tries in the world "so that they were increasingly incapable
 of balanced development."⁴¹ Neocolonialism is the practice of
 a large nation or corporation dominating politically, eco-
 nomically and even culturally smaller nations. The process
 of these two practices has caused the smaller nations to loose
 potential income and control over marketing and internal de-
 velopment and has also created an unequal division of the con-
 sumption of the world's material resources, about 80% being
 used by 20% of the world's population.⁴² "Decades of over-

⁴¹ Finnerty, pp. 9-16.

⁴² Ibid., p. 25.

concentration on export cultivation have left the continent's food-producing regions badly undersupplied with infrastructure, deprived of government services, desperately short of capital for development, and technologically pre-feudal."⁴³

The military arms race is "mega-insane" and between 1945-1976, six trillion dollars has been spent notes Finnerty.⁴⁴ Not only money but a tremendous amount of human energy in our world has been expended in support of and building military support systems. Finnerty lists significant advances in human hunger, disease and pollution that could have been made by utilizing only 5% of the amount spent on military arms.⁴⁵ Not only social needs have been neglected but also precious resources have been wasted, democratic aspirations stifled and countries dominated by military regimes. Needless to say, the military arms build-up has been enormous and today the whole world lives with the possibilities that some confrontation or mistake could very quickly bring the radioactive death of all of us. In response to the arms race and the nuclear crisis, the bishops of the United Methodist Church have undertaken a two-year study of these issues and have created a three-document work entitled In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and A Just Peace.⁴⁶ This is a statement made by United Methodist

⁴³ Eckholm, p. 147.

⁴⁴ Finnerty, p. 46.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 47.

⁴⁶ United Methodist Church, Council of Bishops, In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace, (Nashville: Graded Press, 1986).

bishops and is a call for us as United Methodists to critically, prayerfully and thoughtfully study these critical issues in our society. All three documents, the pastoral letter, the foundation document which gives study materials and the guide for study and action are available through the Cokesbury Service Center in Nashville. Ministry today has to be done in light of God's total creation and as Finnerty points out, we have no choice because "we are part of a functioning world community that is interactive and interdependent."⁴⁷ How can we proclaim the Gospel to a world and people that is hungry, oppressed and dying? We have to be active in programs that stand for peace, justice and conservation of our whole cosmos. No one person, group or country can have the luxury of functioning solely alone because we have the beautiful gifts of the earth and people that were given to us by God, in covenant, to be with God and with all of creation. In the world today, it has become blatantly clear that neglect of this covenant has caused very serious problems. We have to recognize specifically what the problems are and what is happening to cause them, have a vision for how things can be better and take action to mobilize and initiate corrective measures. We have to bring to others the urgency of the needs in the world and put our energies and money and power into working for a better world. There are many issues addressed by the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church and urgency demands

⁴⁷ Finnerty, p. 5.

a knowledge of and action relative to these crucial social issues.

Relationship of the Social Principles
to the Church Today

The church is called to be in witness and in service to the people, to the earth and to the cosmos. Being the church of God made visible in Christ is faith in the mysterious nature of God being a part of life and is received as a gift to humankind through the grace of God. To have faith requires knowing God individually and in community and requires action in life as a response to that faith. Thus the church is the body of Christ, mandated to inspire spiritual communion with God and to inspire and facilitate responsible ministry by all in and to all of God's creation.

Authentic leadership in the church requires knowledge of and understanding of Biblical and church traditions. The Bible portrays God continually being with people, whatever their circumstances. It portrays sin as always being a part of humankind's existence and people have to continually remember the call of being stewards and trustees of God's earth, not owners! Sin is occasioned precisely by the fact that humans refuse to admit their 'creatureliness' and to acknowledge themselves as merely a member of a total unity of life.⁴⁸ When examining structures of justice in society, in addition to

⁴⁸ Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man (New York: Scribner's, 1949), p. 16.

Biblical directions, one should also examine the aspect of power.. Niebuhr lifts up two elements of communal life that are essential: the central organizing principle and power (how power is structured) and the equilibrium of power (balance of vitalities and forces). He asserts that all civilized relations are governed more by spiritual, than by physical facets of power.⁴⁹ This is tremendously an exciting affirmation and promises great hope for the future if indeed spiritual leaders can respond in clarifying and initiating the appropriate spiritual direction. Niebuhr's continuing discussion regards the problems Christian leadership has had in spiritual direction over the centuries.⁵⁰ He culminates by stating Christians must be open to the creative possibilities of justice because of our world economic obligation and the potential anarchy that exists in the world.

The church is called to acknowledge, critique and formulate action that will be involved in and have a vision for an inclusive community for all of God's creation. This must be done locally, nationally and worldwide. It calls for participation in issues such as racism and sexism. For example, America was founded as a country that denies justice to segments of people and continues to exist participating in this same kind of social structure. Injustice exists in the ingrained patterns of racial segregation, the persistence of

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 257-261.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 262-284.

theological individualism, localism and personal piety, the middle class syndrome and pressures of organizations in America. This is no less also true of the church. Ministry in a global church in the real world is no choice today, it is mandated. It is imperative in the existence of our earth and of human-kind. It is the cry of the Gospel in being the church, the body of Christ, as so aptly put by Costas.⁵¹ His thesis is our example of Christ and how Christ was crucified and resurrected "outside the gate," separated from institutions, the establishment and the status quo. The church must recognize this life that Jesus proclaims and personifies, gives vision for a new community. In ministry we must see the incarnation of Christ as a new and fresh experience within harsh realities; we must see the distortions of our historical evaluation of our experiences of Christ; and we must contextualize the gospel in the world of the oppressed in that it must be tested and verified.⁵² He goes on and points up three priorities of a united global mission:

first, to create and take part in programs that affirm life and denounce violence; second, to promote human solidarity to encourage unity among Christians by using all means within our reach and at all levels; and third, to cooperate in evangelistic efforts that foster holistic church growth and a deep historical commitment to the gospel. Thus we shall be helping to pour out our churches' energies toward the transformation of the space we occupy on our planet.⁵³

The most refreshing information presented by Costas is

⁵¹ Orlando E. Costas, Christ Outside the Gate: Mission Beyond Christendom (New York: Orbis, 1982).

⁵² Ibid., pp. 13-16.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 98.

his articulation of the United States being a new Macedonia.⁵⁴ He feels that many Americans are alienated from God and neighbor and that our witness in the world is indissolubly part of our culture and society. He lifts up the needs of recognizing and affirming our rich cultural heritages, of identifying and owning our civil religion (the American way of life) which blesses our social order, of addressing our domination and oppression of the environment and other peoples and the distorting of theology, the gospel and church hierarchy. Costas continues by pointing toward four actions that we as American Christians need to do. First, we should respond by seeking to understand the social, personal and theological truths in the cry of our neighbors. Second, we should acknowledge our responsibilities, politically, militarily, culturally and religiously in the affliction that we have helped create. Third, we should accept our share of the responsibility in partnership with other peoples to fulfill God's mission of justice and righteousness. And fourth, we should start collaboratively with our nearest neighbor, those suffering here in our midst.

The theology of ministry from a Latin American liberation viewpoint calls for a new kind of ministry. It is not one of maintaining the status quo but one of turning things "upside down." As indicated by the Latin American churches, the catholic church has already been significantly changed by

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 71-83.

the conference at Medellin and the receptivity of Vatican II to that conference. It is the reflection of Christians participating in human struggles and in "the story," all Christians, not just a few elite. It is the breaking in of a new life and new dimensions in church mission and evangelism; a new way of being Christian and being spiritual. It is a Biblical way of a liberator God being known in the experiences of captivity and oppression and bringing liberation to all. Its goal is the conceiving of a new future and has as its task that of creating a counter-culture. Theologically, it is praxis, which means a dynamic interaction between theory and practice, between action and reflection and it comes out of experience and out of engagement. If taken seriously, liberation theology is offering some new directions for the church. First, we would listen to the realities of the world, of us and others. Second, we would realize that churches too, must change sides. Third, we would meet in small groups committed to changing sides. Fourth, we would proudly enter the political arena working for a just society. And fifth, we would move in a direction to see the church as a global community, working with all toward a more loving and just society.

CHAPTER 3

The Pedagogical Task

Educating for Change

Education for change is a vital and very difficult component of today's Christian ministry in a global church. This must be done at all levels and with all peoples who are Christian. Costas points to three challenges for the institutional church and academic theology.¹ Personal and social transformation must stand side by side with the priority and normativeness of Scripture. Theology must be done from the perspective of the losers and not from the sterility of academia. The institutional church must recognize the ethical impotence of the institutional church in an unjust world and be involved in radical conversion. Allen J. Moore, calls for critical reflection on praxis and for "fewer programs of Christian education and more changes in our personal life-styles and in the way the church forms its institutional life."² This calls for doing theology out of real social experience and a new Christian consciousness "that will be aware of how deeply our faith is culturally bound and that will be aware

¹Costas, p. 131.

²Allen J. Moore, "Liberation and the Future of Christian Education," in Contemporary Approaches to Christian Education, eds. J. L. Seymour and D. E. Miller (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982), p. 110.

of the new global dimensions of human life."³

Christian education should be centered in change which is transformation in the image of Jesus the Christ. Change such as this can not be taught or memorized, it is a process of acting and reflecting and has as its hope the reconciliation between God and humanity. Warford states "the most critical educational concern in the churches should be how the local congregation can represent in its life a transforming and liberating community of faith."⁴ He goes on to say that too often the maintenance of the church becomes more important than struggling to find the real purpose and meaning of the church. Wilke affirms this maintenance ministry calling it "sheepdog strategy."⁵ There is an absence of faith in the church, a faith that should be a deepening and renewing dynamic in our lives. It seems the structures have overshadowed the deeper need to form a sense of reality that forms our feelings and our inner lives. Warford feels one way to do this is to separate ourselves from our real home and then return (like the Prodigal son); another way is creating experiences where the events of memory and tradition become a contemporary reality. He insists the center of concern in Christian education is Jesus Christ, the liberator and that education is

³ Ibid., p. 116.

⁴ Malcolm L. Warford, The Necessary Illusion (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1976), p. 9.

⁵ Richard B. Wilke, And Are We Yet Alive: The Future

praxis; this praxis he defines as action and reflection aimed at transforming the world.⁶ Thus the church's growth as a liberating community must be evoked and the development of its critical consciousness must be developed. Warford poses some new options for education that transforms human lives:

participation in community;
a dialogical, problem posing process;
a critique of everyday life;
a faith that makes a difference in decision-making.⁷

In view of these suggestions, education then is a part of the whole mission and ministry of the church, a part of all of life in the church. In conclusion, Warford feels the church's ideal form is a covenant community and the Christian story empowers individuals in the understanding and transforming of life.

Elizondo firmly believes that Jesus, in action, goes to the very roots of an unjust world order; and that Biblical justice "is concerned with the re-creation of human beings and of the world as it has been created by human beings."⁹ This human world has made humans slaves and brought enmity between humans, between humans and God, and between humans

of the United Methodist Church (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986), pp. 1-64.

⁶ Warford, pp. 41-52.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 75-87.

⁸ Virgil Elizondo, "By Their Fruits You Will Know Them: The Biblical Roots of Peace and Justice," in Education for Peace and Justice, ed. Padraic O'Hare (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), p. 53.

⁹ Ibid., p. 39.

and creation. He continues by saying that Jesus is the way to restore life to humans so that we can be responsible cultivators of creation, concerned brothers and sisters of one another and faithful friends of God.¹⁰

Niebuhr affirms that each person must reach their own conclusion about what being a Christian means.¹¹ The decision is relative in that it depends on the amount of individual knowledge, on the measure of faith or unbelief, on the status of environment and on the relative value of things. The decision is also existential in that it "must be made in freedom by a responsible subject acting in the present moment on the basis of what is true for them."¹² The decision must be made in freedom because one must choose. In the Christian fellowship, "faith is a dual bond of loyalty and trust that is woven around the members of such a community."¹³ So it would certainly seem to follow that decisions about living a Christian life must be made individually but also must be made in the context of a Christian community. This community must seek and live out ways of participating in the global church to bring about change for a more just society.

Educating for change by using a wholistic approach to ministry is advocated by one of today's leading theologians, Thomas Groome. He feels that "it is within a Christian/social

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 53.

¹¹ Richard H. Niebuhr, Christ and Culture (New York: Harper and Row, 1951).

¹² Ibid., p. 241.

¹³ Ibid., p. 253.

cultural environment that people come to appropriate the symbols which carry forward the tradition. It is there that they encounter role models, a world view, and a value system that can be interiorized as their own Christian self-identity."¹⁴

A most important point Groome puts forth is that this socialization in Christian education can not stand alone. It must also include "dialectical relationship between the community and its surrounding social/cultural environment, and between the community and its individual members."¹⁵ In other words, it must critique, question and call us forward toward being more faithful Christians. It is not an end in itself, it is a means in response to the Kingdom of God and must lead us beyond toward a vision for the future. This vision as Christians must be one that leads toward human rights, a just social order and strategies for global survival. We must learn to recognize the value of each other as children of God.

Wren states that it is much easier for the victims of injustice to become aware and work for change than it is for the oppressors to do so.¹⁶ It is difficult for those who are in power and in control of the wealth of a nation to readily identify with the real needs of those who have little power and wealth. Change could easily make a difference in the

¹⁴ Thomas H. Groome, Christian Religious Education (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980), p. 115.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 126.

¹⁶ Brian Wren, Education for Justice: Pedagogical Principles (New York: Maryknoll, 1977), pp. 83-86.

established order and that could be a threat to the oppressors. The fear, hostility, guilt, and bafflement of the oppressor should not be confronted, but should be worked with as a problem. There should be dialogue where feelings are examined and understood, and where issues are investigated in a climate of acceptance. The key to personal change is self-acceptance by the individual. "For the Christian it means going back to the gospel promise of love that accepts all, without distinction."¹⁷ In a loving and caring environment, everyone can come to some simple steps that will lead to a more just society. Thus, educating for social change must realize there is a fundamental clash of interests between the victims (the oppressed) and those who benefit from the system (the oppressors). Educators for justice need to have a clear understanding of the power and conflict between these two groups before mutual respect and equality of worth can be introduced and established.

Educating for Character Formation

Probably one of the most crucial areas in the field of Christian educational ministry is that of building religious character, i.e., morals and values. Apart from character, ministry is only religious activity or may ultimately be defined as religious "business." This is probably why God spent so much time with his servants, for example, Joseph (Genesis 37-41), Moses (Exodus 2-12), Samuel (1 Samuel 1-3), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1)

¹⁷Ibid., p. 85.

and Paul (Acts 7-9). The stories of great Christian men and women reveal that God first builds Christian character in servants, and then through them builds a ministry. Silberman beautifully describes Christian education that builds moral character as: "character is what remains when the formal lessons have been forgotten."¹⁸ Wingeier, the author of the monograph, goes on to state that he feels the most important goal of the future in education is to teach people how to learn and adjust to the many new developments in culture and value systems of the future. Adding a new dimension to this theory, that of building Christian character, would seemingly greatly enhance the future vision of the Christian community, the church.

Building Christian character or value formation is also discussed by Logan.¹⁹ He addresses the need of theology to reach three dimensions of each individual: (1) the head trip which is concerned with acquisition of knowledge (doctrine); (2) the hands and feet trip which is concerned with social involvement (ethics); and (3) the heart trip which is concerned with feeling (piety). Logan supports a position of combining all three. He states this must be done in the context of justification by grace through faith (being before

¹⁸ Cited in Douglas E. Wingeier, General Education as a Source in Shaping the Church's Educational Work, Education Futures, Monograph #9 (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1974), pp. 25-26.

¹⁹ James C. Logan, Theology as a Source in Shaping the Church's Educational Work, Education Futures, Monograph #8 (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1974), pp. 13-15.

doing) and by emphasizing that we as Christians need to be alert to new opportunities in the future while at the same time have internalized criteria to help us explore a more viable and faithful future. We must educate for value formation hand in hand with serious Bible study.

To teach for building character or moral values, one must be acquainted with a vision of these values. Raymond Johnston states moral values are general rules which characterise moral discourse, not a set of dos and don'ts.²⁰ He quotes moral guidelines as including: (1) being rational - using logic; (2) being autonomous - holding intentional views for a reason; (3) being impartial - following the principle of universality; and (4) being prescriptive - speaking commits the speaker to acting on what he says. His ideal in moral education is the altruistic, autonomous individual in whom moral activity should concern clarifying principles, arguing and choosing. For Christians, the Christian story is the cultural and historical heart of thinking, teaching, planning, being and doing in building Christian character. Johnston's thesis is that moral education is best taught through the language of myth. He feels myths should allow persons to search their deepest meanings, to satisfy both individual emotional needs and guide community social needs, to offer a vision of the ideal, to open investigation of history, and to transcend all age levels.

²⁰ Ninian Smart and Donald Horder, eds. New Movements in Religious Education (London: Temple Smith, 1975), pp. 76-93.

The myths intertwined in the Biblical stories afford a tremendous opportunity for building Christian character.

The philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead values the use of character formation as being a significant event in religious understanding and formation. The inspiration of religion is not in dogma, but lies in the history of religion, in the primary expressions of the intuitions of persons. Dogmatic expression is necessary but only expresses bits of truth and if used as ends in themselves lead toward idolatry. Whitehead suggests concrete forms of understanding inspiration in a chapter on "The Romantic Reaction."²¹ He uses various excerpts from literary writing to discover the inward thoughts of people, "a generation" and uses it to establish the premise that the romantic reaction era was a protest on behalf of values. Religious writings and experiences can in the same way produce a growth of reverence in the intuition of human beings. This is closely related to the power of persuasion.²² The fate of social groups is governed by four factors: (1) there must be some transcendent aim for progressive life; (2) bodily necessities must be provided; (3) there is a compulsory dominion of individuals over other individuals; and (4) there is a way of persuasion. Whitehead states that progressive societies trust in the last factor and notes three activities that promote persuasion, family affections,

²¹ Alfred North Whitehead, Science and the Modern World (New York: Free Press, 1967), pp. 75-94.

²² Alfred North Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas (New York: Free Press, 1967), pp. 85-86.

intellectual curiosity, and the growth of reverence. The latter is what brings conscious discrimination in respect for other people and of all of creation; that which is required to enhance the world. Expression, then, is a fundamental sacrament of truth. It is the outward sign of an inward and spiritual grace. It is the way for individuals to return from solitariness to society. It is the way to verify what is known in secret with others, and what is known with others must also be known in secret.

The content of education may include music, artistic drawings, paintings, great literary writings, and in Christian education, the Bible as well as other sources. The written word can provide the concrete data or particular fact definite for individual apprehension from which to move to general ideas. Large scale generalizations of history are meaningless;²³ education needs to relate to something concrete, a concrete example such as models, pictures, diagrams and charts.

The concrete example is only the beginning of the process for in isolation, it becomes nothing. Personal involvement has to be evoked bringing forth emotion for action, for development of the intuition, for internalization. There are many available materials to guide one in opening one up to the word. Care should be taken in choosing material or study guides. Suggestions of ideas to look for are truths that

²³ Alfred North Whitehead, The Aims of Education (New York: Free Press, 1967), pp. 73-74.

are universally and individually applicable, reference(s) to the eternal truth (God), consideration for the whole of creation, concepts that draw upon or make reference to all subject matter and arenas of life as lived today. Also very important for Bible study is seeing and feeling the interdependence and relationship of different parts of the Bible to each other. One good example of the latter is a book by Rece and Beardslee.²⁴

In Aims of Education, Whitehead actually makes comparatively few references to religion.²⁵ He is emphatic, however, in his reiteration of religion always being an intimate part of education and has been since the very beginning of human life. To answer his question what is religious education, he states:

A religious education is an education which inculcates duty and reverence. Duty arises from our potential control over the course of events. Where attainable knowledge could have changed the issue, ignorance has the guilt of vice. And the foundation of reverence is this perception, that the present holds within itself the complete sum of existence, backwards and forwards, that whole amplitude of time, which is eternity.²⁶

The content of education needs to be concerned with training in the habit of apprehending in completeness. For example, take the enjoyment by many of a fat, juicy chocolate bar. Just eating it is an end in itself, however, educated people should

²⁴ E. H. Rece and William A. Beardslee, Reading the Bible: A Guide (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1964).

²⁵ Whitehead, Aims, p. 14.

²⁶ Alfred North Whitehead, Religion in the Making (New York: New American Library, 1974), p. 14.

have thoughts evoked relative to manufacturing, sales, agribusiness in other lands, employment opportunities, land use and so on. This is just a very simple example of how to train for completeness. This idea can be applicable to most learnings which need to be interrelated to all facets of society and creation. Education then is for life experiences, it is discovering the relations which exist in the flux of perceptions, sensations and emotions.

Burnett lifts up several aims he feels are important in Whitehead's educational philosophy, and these have implications for the content of education.²⁷ He points up artistry in living, as being the most important aim and describes this art as growth that gives the broadest and deepest development of powers for enjoyment and creation. Other less general ideals identified are aesthetic comprehension, wisdom and religiousness. Aesthetic comprehension is derived from a sense of values and is cultivation of the source of all special art forms, the adventure of existence in all of its novelty. Educating for the art of life is certainly different than the traditional aims of professionalization, specialization, and departmentalization. An important part of wisdom is intellectual endeavors, however, Burnett points up also the importance of relating book knowledge to experience so that life may be vivified, understood and directed.

²⁷ Joe Ray Burnett, "The Educational Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead" (Thesis, New York Univ., 1958).

There needs to be much more guidance in the ideals and values that guide life processes. The ideal of religiousness is vitally a part of the other aims and as indicated earlier cannot necessarily be segregated or isolated into a separate category.

Throughout this discussion of an education that is wholistic and universally relative, inference has been made in a variety of ways as to the subtle differences in this "kind" of education. It is hoped that the interrelatedness of religious education to all of creation and in all areas of human thought has been suggested to and witnessed in this project. The changes in this approach to learning thus creates the need for different spheres of importance on the part of the teacher/leader/facilitator of education. The golden rule of education, says Whitehead is that subject matter must be evoked here and now.²⁸ He goes on to say that teachers must eradicate the disconnection of subjects and focus on one subject matter, life in all its manifestations. For a living organism the creative impulse toward growth comes from within and the teacher has a double function to elicit enthusiasm from within and to create the environment of a larger knowledge and a firmer purpose.²⁹ The sense of value and importance is the ultimate power and comes in various forms: reverence, wonder, curiosity, worship and desire.

²⁸ Whitehead, Aims, pp. 6-7.

²⁹ Whitehead, Science, pp. 37-40.

There needs to be utmost and continuing importance placed on the balance in the growth of individuality.³⁰ Intellectual analysis should strengthen habits of concrete appreciation of emerging values and abstract formulations should include the interplay of diverse values. Whitehead says education should have a clear end, congenial to the student and vital components are the intellect, the printed book and intuition of the total environment. He continues to warn of the danger of departmentalization of professionalization as most individuals will be called upon in life to face novel situations which have no parallel in the past.

Educating for the doctrine of the "living emotion" no doubt will require special training. G. F. Moore is quoted:

Civilization develops only where considerable numbers of men work together for common ends. Such unity is brought about, not so much by community of bare ideas as by community of the feelings by which ideas are emotionalized and become beliefs and motives.³¹

This again requires education for the inclusive whole or correctedness of all of creation. Meland urges colleges to nurture the whole person.³² He gives specific examples of ways to educate for the goal of evoking emotions, however, they are in humanistic and religious language that would probably discourage viability for a number of institutions. Meland reiterates the dissocation of thinking and learning

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 198-199.

³¹ Whitehead, Adventures, pp. 232-233.

³² Bernard Eugene Meland, Higher Education and the Human Spirit (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1953).

from creative effort and from acts of affirmation. He feels the whole person needs to be facilitated toward explicit sensitivities and sensibilities which engender a responsive nature. Both the critical learning and the creative response are important in educating the whole individual. In speaking of revelation Niebuhr states: "We mean that something has happened to us in our history which conditions all our thinking and that through this happening we are enabled to apprehend what we are, what we are suffering and doing and what our potentialities are."³³ He refers to emotion as a "leap of faith or revolution of the mind" and affirms that emotion can lead from observation to participation and from observed to lived history.³⁴ This is the kind of emotion that teachers need to be trained to elicit.

The training of teachers is very important when educating for Christian character formation.³⁵ Education has to be with meaning in that ideas must be related to sense perceptions and mental activities. Propositions and theoretical ideas should find important application in life. Education is a very patient, slow process and it should help students see "the wood by means of the trees." Subject matter such as math, science, social studies, should be serious means of studying the world in which students feel like they are

³³ Richard H. Niebuhr The Meaning of Revelation (New York: MacMillan, 1941), p. 61.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Whitehead, Aims, pp. 1-14.

studying something, not just learning fragmented information. The same is true with studying compartmentalized issues in the church. Education has to impact an intimate sense for the power, beauty and structure of ideas that have a meaningful (emotion arousing) reference to the learner.

Westerhoff affirms that education in the Christian community has been too confined.³⁶ He states that "in order for a person to be introduced to the Christian faith, education is going to have to be understood as more than classroom instruction, more than imparting information about what the Bible says, what occurred in the history of the church, what Christians believe, or what right and wrong behavior is."³⁷ Westerhoff defines education as inviting a person to participate actively in the life of a community of those who act Christian. He quotes Bonhoeffer, Calvin, Bushnell, and Barth as also being proponents of a "doing and lived" faith experience. In the church, programs can be designed, promoted and initiated that invite response from the entire church community. These may include collecting food, clothing and money for a mission, church work days, family camp-outs, fellowship dinners and programs. Participation events such as these may incorporate all persons at all age levels to yield group and individual benefits. These kinds of activities, however, must be done in light of mission and ministry to and

³⁶John H. Westerhoff, III, Values for Tomorrow's Children (New York: Pilgrim, 1979), pp. 25-45.

³⁷Ibid., p. 29.

with the entirety of creation. They afford the opportunity for persons to move beyond intellectualizing and the 'talking stage' to an active participation of what it is to be the church.

Educating for Social Awareness

Educating for social awareness must have as its central focus Jesus Christ and the transformation of life that is possible through him. For it is only through the grace of God that the difficult process of changing conditioned values, actions, and attitudes emerge as a possibility in human lives. An important component in this type of education must be study of the Bible and of church tradition. We need to read, contemplate, feel, taste, and touch those who have lived in response to God throughout history. Religious education should stand in the very center of the church to engage in the sacramental ministry and to teach religion (Matt. 28.16-20). A teaching core in the church including lay persons, professional Christian educators and the clergy should be actively involved in teaching the Christian faith. There should be an opportunity for all children, youth, and adults to actively study the Bible and to study church tradition. These studies need to include viable relationships to Christian living in today's world. Colin Alves states that religion and education need to provide a context for each other; the educational process needs to take account of the phenomenon of religion with all its claims about human nature and human destiny.³⁸

³⁸ Cited in Smart and Herder, eds., New Movements, pp. 12-32.

He goes on to say that religion provides a critique for the culture one inherits. Christian living is also a theme that is highly emphasized by James Michael Lee.³⁹ He feels the religious education curriculum should revolve around the teaching of Christian doctrine which is an operationalized pattern of life or lifestyle. We need to sense the presence of God and share this presence in the community of believers. Miller states "the major task for Christian education is to discover and impart the relevance of Christian truth."⁴⁰ He feels the purpose of Christian education is to place God at the center and to bring the individual into the right relationship with God and with others. A slogan he has used many times is: "Theology in the background: grace and faith in the foreground."

Group meetings incorporating Bible study and Christian living for adults can in many instances be held in the evenings, rather than on Sunday mornings. Elizabeth O'Connor discusses group spiritual disciplines that need to be followed to inspire people to transmit the very life of Christ to other people.⁴¹ She states there should be balanced discipline relating God, persons, and things, specific and definite disciplines of the spiritual life and graduated disciplines that

³⁹ James Michael Lee, The Religious Education We Need (Mishawaka, Indiana: Religious Education Press, 1977), pp. 112-155.

⁴⁰ Randolph Crump Miller, The Theory of Christian Education (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1980), pp. 156-157.

⁴¹ Elizabeth O'Connor, Call to Commitment (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 33-37.

allow and encourage people from different levels of faith development to participate. An excellent discussion of small groups and a suggested format for group meetings was included in the Leadership journal.⁴² The following five spiritual disciplines were: (1) daily time in the Scripture; (2) daily prayer; (3) regular fellowship; (4) witnessing to others; and (5) helping individuals who are hurting. The format suggested for weekly meetings was outlined to include one half hour for refreshments, one hour for Bible study (around a table), forty-five minutes for sharing and fifteen minutes for prayer. In group study, it is most exciting to see individuals take steps outside of their "comfortable" spheres of influence and experience sharing with others, experiencing new worlds and moving on to more meaningful ways of increasing their Biblical knowledge and of being better servants in the Kingdom of God. Brown states that "change occurs when frustration is (1) encountered, (2) confronted, (3) experienced, and (4) worked through."⁴³ This is what happens many times in groups which require commitment and involvement.

Social awareness education for volunteers who work in the church is very important. A great wealth of the church comes from the lay workers who continue to give of themselves

⁴² James R. Tozer, "Small Groups: How One Church Does It," Leadership: A Practical Journal for Church Leaders, 1, no. 4 (Fall 1980): 58-66.

⁴³ George Isaac Brown, Human Teaching for Human Learning (New York: Viking Press, 1971), p. 230.

to others. Motivation to serve comes from the Holy Spirit and Christian educators have a great responsibility to work with lay persons in helping them live out their faith commitment. We need to acquaint ourselves with these individuals, listen to their needs, desires and abilities in offering themselves for service. Personal growth for individuals is most important and volunteers need to know that they are worthwhile and to receive a feeling of accomplishment with the job(s) they do. Motivation by the Holy Spirit needs to lead us to establishing and building the church and the love of God in others rather than using or manipulating individuals into filling empty teaching positions or fulfilling needs desired by an officer or leader in the church. We need to be protective of volunteers in allowing them to serve to fulfill their faith commitment while at the same time encouraging them to develop a deeper sense of responding to God in their lives. This is a part of social awareness education. Lay people come with a wide variety of skills and talents and we must allow the Holy Spirit and professional expertise to help these volunteers mold into a cadre of Spiritual servants. Training should provide an opportunity for them to recognize their own strengths and talents, the gifts of other volunteers and should address concerns and issues relevant to their needs and to the needs of the church in the world. The format of continuing sessions should be changed to excite new interest, to provide a means to a more meaningful experience and to attempt to be more inclusive in the training program. This

will hopefully bring forth learning experiences that will be beneficial to all. The goal of what volunteers are called to do should be specific while the means of reaching the goal should include a variety of ideas and an openness for trying new approaches that help formulate a vision for the future.

Responsible participation in a study group can best be accomplished when there is open and honest communication between individuals. There needs to be a sharing, loving and a caring that develops with the guidance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that each person brings to the group. There are bound to be strengths and weaknesses, agreements and disagreements, happy and sad times, struggles for power, and so on. The church is called to reconciliation and grace must allow one to be reconciled before one can share that reconciliation with others. This does not mean that ministry is catering, duty, or subjugation. Norman Wegmeyer outlines some excellent guidelines for leadership in church ministry.⁴⁴ Above all, people should be respected as children of God, encouraged, praised, and respected at their own level of contribution. Maintaining honest and open communication with people is important and this includes honestly sharing with others, letting others know your position and having a healthy, realistic self-image. Using conflict creatively can stimulate creative thought, release built-up tension, and pave the way for fruitful

⁴⁴ Cited in Richard Allan Olson, ed., The Pastor's Role in Educational Ministry (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), pp. 221-241.

decision and action. Leaders need to use judgment in performing different roles such as questioner, teacher, admonisher, encourager, and mediator and need to be involved in setting short term and long term goals and teaching groups goal-setting techniques. It is very important that the decision-making process is followed appropriately and leads to understanding and better working relationships. This process carries forth into the enlistment and involvement of individuals to be involved in accomplishing the task put forth by a decision made. Jobs must be meaningful and individuals must feel the importance of the job in meeting the needs of the whole group. Another key role is that of developing leadership in the church; this includes the following growth areas: skills, self-image, information and inspiration. This can be done in groups or with individuals and should involve nurture, love, risk-taking, enthusiasm and sharing in defining and re-defining a vision for the future. Evaluation should be a continuous process as well as a periodic review of the growth of a group in the church. The ultimate question should always bring forth the vision of what the church is called to be and evaluating whether we indeed, are moving toward that vision.

Wren strongly advocates education by dialogue, experience and real-life situations and that learning comes forth from groups who participate, discover and critically investigate together.⁴⁵ The techniques, structure and the

⁴⁵ Wren, 145 pages.

messages of behavior must all promote dialogue that enhances social awareness and what is right and what is just. The chairs should be arranged in a circle to put all people on an equal basis. Group size should be eight to twelve people to encourage dialogue and participation. Small groups of diads or triads should only meet for a short period of time, about five to eight minutes. Education for justice should give more time to interaction than to presentation continues Wren.⁴⁶ Thus adequate time is given for trust and openness to develop. Time together over a number of meetings together is essential in educating for social awareness. Wren also draws upon the Bible and Christian tradition to point up the different kinds of social justice and to lay foundation to his recommended pedagogical principles.⁴⁷ He too, points to the love of Christ, a love that accepts and reaches out to all human beings, offering forgiveness and hope to all. He states that it is this love that leads one, whether the oppressed or the oppressor, to self-acceptance and self-acceptance is the key to personal change.⁴⁸ Education for justice must be aware of the great difference between the victims and the oppressors and must have a clear understanding of the power and conflict between the two.

Meaning dialogue with other people, that which brings about human transformation together is mandatory in education

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 119-126.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 43-68.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 85.

for freedom.⁴⁹ Freire feels that all human beings are potentially able to reflect, to act and to become aware of society. This then can lead to understanding the limits and the possibilities of freedom in our lives. However, a big factor is that few people upon their own recognition see or feel a need for necessary change. Freire has used a process which is called conscientization to educate illiterates in South America and Africa.⁵⁰ This is a practice of action and reflection which begins with people where they are and begins in dialogue with the people reflecting on their belief about reality as perceived daily by them. Through this process, oppressive elements are identified and people begin to recognize that the world is made, is being re-created all the time and that all people (in particular, themselves) are a part of the re-creation that is happening. In this style of education, the students are active subjects in the learning process and they evaluate their own practice. This successful method for teaching illiterates education has been and perhaps will continue to be a subversive force to those who hold political and economic control; the reason being that education frees people to transform society. This model of education certainly has strong implications for all educators. One is the success

⁴⁹ Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972).

⁵⁰ Paul Freire, Education for Critical Consciousness (New York: Seabury, 1973).

that can result from this process of conscientization designed and utilized by Freire. The other being the transformation of society, one which could have a certain amount of risk involved, but one when used in the context of the transformation of lives as called for by Jesus Christ, could have great implications in educating for social change in the context of the Christian community.

Being a Christian in today's world is service, that which benefits or helps one another and is modeled after and expressive of the serving and representing characteristics of Christ's ministry. Christian education "provides a genuine service to the basic human need to know, the drive to make sense out of and attain competence in the world of chaotic data impressions we all experience from birth."⁵¹ As Christians we need to be in community, to experience, to teach, to learn, to care, to theologize, to prophesy, to grow, to love, and to share. We need to be concerned citizens in a community, a nation and a world. We should be about defining needs and the specific groups of people who have those needs. We have to have a focused ministry that will lead to action conclusions and have a vision for the future and an open dialogue on planning, sharing, and preparing for this future. A beautiful book by George Albert Coe relates many very meaningful experiences and suggestions involving persons in a community

⁵¹ Maria Harris, ed. Parish Religious Education (New York: Paulist, 1978), p. 434.

of doing.⁵² He suggests that educators should be leading persons to discovering, thinking, purposing, planning, executing, and criticizing together. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, church members have an exciting task in the present and future ministry of the church in the world.

⁵² George Albert Coe, Law and Freedom in the School (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1924), p. 133.

CHAPTER 4

Introduction and Sessions

Introduction

The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church provides the structure for the sessions as outlined throughout this chapter. A copy of these need to be available to each participant in the study at the first meeting. These may be obtained as mentioned in the resources in Chapter 1. The intention of this study is to provide the framework for a small group study for ten to fourteen persons that may be used to facilitate growth in understanding of self, of the church and of the world. There are six human issues in the contemporary world that guide the format of the sessions: the natural world, the nurturing community, the social community, the economic community, the political community, and the world community. There are twelve, two-hour sessions for adults in all, two on each human issue, a Bible reference, a portion of the Social Principles and session experiences.

Being the church and living responsibly in the world is of utmost importance, thus commitment on the part of the participants should be expected. It is recommended that individuals join the study prepared to attend at least ten of the twelve sessions and to spend approximately one hour (two thirty minute periods of time) reading assigned materials.

This overview study is designed on a continuum and for the optimum experience should be offered in a designated "quarter" of the year.

Notification and information about the study should begin two to three months prior to the first meeting. Personal contacts encouraging participation help in the recruiting process. Written articles attract more attention when written differently and when they address topics of interest for a specific congregation or perhaps have reference to the respective season of the year. Examples follow that were written for a class beginning in January:

New, New Class to Begin January 9

Students are exploring new and different kinds of ideas and nothing is different for seminary students!!! Rev. Judy Flanegin will be leading a 12-week course she just wrote exploring the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church. This will be a group exploration together of the Bible, and of being the church. The Social Principles address the issues of nature (God's creation), our own community, society, economics, politics and our world community. We will meet at the church on Thursday evenings beginning January 9 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. For more information or to sign up, please call Judy at 551-4199 or the church office.

New Discoveries

May the Christ come to you this Christmas in the laughter of a small child, in the words of kindness from a harried shopper, in the beauty of the snowcapped mountains and other

ways too, if we just take the time to see God's beauty. Celebrating Christmas with Christ may just be looking at our modern world with a different perspective than that of always seeing the dominating persuasions of the secular. Seeing God in our world is important too, in human interactions, in missions, in social action. Consider a gift of commitment to learn more about what, we as "United Methodists" believe. Join Rev. Judy Flanegin for the new 12-week class on the Social Principles beginning Thursday, January 9.

New Beginnings for the New Year

The aftermath! The packed trash cans, the empty tree, friends and relatives now departed and what a perfect time to consider what might be better in life for the coming new year. Resolutions are usually personal and so appropriate in that it is a commitment to us and sometimes in our programmed lives we forget about the "me" that needs to be nourished and fed. Consider the possibility of learning more about God in the world, of Christ in our life and what it means to be the church in the world. Give yourself a resolution of growth and join the new 12-week class centered on the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church which begins Thursday, January 9 from 7-9 p.m. Participants are asked to attend at least 10 of the 12 class sessions. This is a small group experience planned for about sixteen adults. For more information or to sign up, call Rev. Judy Flanegin, 551-4199 or the church office.

Some basic premises provided motivation and guidance in the preparation of these sessions and these may be used to introduce the study at the first meeting. One is the whole Bible is a source for personal growth and for meeting God personally and in human history. A second idea is the interdependence of all of creation and how human beings have to understand and feel an urgency about recognizing and building up the whole. A third premise is that learning experiences must elicit enthusiasm and create an environment of larger knowledge and a firmer purpose. There must be an appeal to intimate, intuitive power such as that of wonder, curiosity, reverence and worship. It is what Wink states so beautifully:

"As knower I know that in the knowledge gained of the object I am first of all known. There is here an unveiling through the object that discloses to me a depth beyond my reckoning, a depth through which I begin to be released from egocentric stratagems and reunite with all creation."¹

It is an appeal to the wisdom of the heart where one is cognizant of creative, experiential and attitudinal values.² A fourth idea is that the church has not been very good about educating for a wholistic ministry in our world. There are certainly a lot of mission type programs and actions but many times these are haphazardly and sporadically accomplished

¹ Walter Wink, The Bible in Human Transformation (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), p. 68.

² Viktor E. Frankl, The Unconscious God (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975).

with fragmentation and with no vision or evaluation of the whole. Another premise is that the church is community and the way to build community is to be with one another, to learn, laugh, cry, struggle, support and be "the Christ" to each other. Following are the sessions.

Session 1: "Caretakers"

Readings:

Genesis 1 to 2:3

Social Principles of the United Methodist Church, The Natural World (see copy attached)

Group participants will come not having had an assignment for the first session. Introduce the study by a personal welcome and a brief overview of the ideas and introductory material presented above. Stress the importance of the commitment of each individual present and that of all of us learning together.

Read aloud the scripture or have a taped reading played on the tape recorder. The latter is preferred so the leader/facilitator can concentrate on the receptivity of the participants. Following the reading divide into diads to discuss: How are human beings related to the rest of creation? Explain that when they return to the group in 10 minutes, they will be sharing the answers of their partners. If group members are not acquainted with one another the first few minutes in the diad may be spent together for introduction. As indicated, when the group reconvenes, each will share the others answer to the question.

Divide the group into groups of 3 or 4 to read an assigned

section of the natural world, A, B, C, or D and discuss issues involved on "How the age of technology has enhanced or hindered the natural world." It is important to assign members to groups so that all will have the opportunity to be with all other participants in the group on some occasion. Ask each group to be prepared to report back to the entire group after 10 minutes of interaction. Reassemble the group for reporting.

Divide again into groups of 3 or 4 for the purpose of writing a newspaper advertisement for a "caretaker" for the natural world. Distribute large sheets of paper and marking pens for the ad. Come together after 10 minutes of work and share ads that have been posted for all to visualize.

Make the assignment for session two and read together the preamble to the Social Principles. Have those on the left read one sentence, those on the right another, alternating, and all read the last paragraph together. Close with a prayer. Suggest that participants read the assignment during the next day or two and also again the day or evening before the next class session. Take names, addresses and phone numbers to prepare a list of participants to distribute at the next session.

Session 2: "From Death to Life"

Readings:

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Preface, Preamble and The Natural World

Open the session by going around the room and each person sharing a thought they had had the last week about the natural

world and perhaps a brief statement of "why" or relative to "what." Briefly discuss the scripture of Ezekiel writing for the exiles following the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jews being deported to Babylon. Ezekiel was trying to save the people from total despair; he was a comforter and suggested hope and restoration of the people. Read Ezekiel 36:26-28 about the "first heart transplant" and ask if there are any comments on the assigned scripture.

Briefly review session one held the week before. Point up that the group is just beginning to know one another; recall some of the ministries shared, for example Donna's ministry to seniors, Ron's professional work in engineering that addresses the degradation of God's creation, Elizabeth's nursing many through illness, Jackie's continued sharing with children and so on. In knowing others, it helps us to know ourselves better and to know God and see God working in new and different ways. Each person has a very rich history and it is important to distinguish significant events; this may help others to think of very important times in life. It also may help us see what influences have been important in our lives and thus lead us to more closely evaluate the actions we do and how these may influence others.

Distribute large sheets of paper (12" x 18" is good) and small tipped marking pens to each person. Have them draw or symbolize their life journey including the important events, experiences of joy or pain that have been significant, the people that have been influential and so on. Explain

that they will be sharing their "journey" with others but they only are encouraged to share what they would feel comfortable in sharing. Allow 15 minutes for the drawing and then have them pair up with another person to share their journey. Ask them to try to pair up with someone they haven't had the opportunity of being with in a group. Come together and each tell about the journey of the person with whom they were paired.

The next portion of time is designed to help participants focus on some specific issues relative to our natural world: water, air, soil, plants, energy utilization, animal life, space and so on. Either the exercise to be described here with Psalm 139 or the one in the next paragraph (divide in to six groups) may be used. God is a very intimate part of all creation. Read responsively Psalm 139. The last verses lead into the question of "evil." The scripture indicates in a number of instances where good can come from death/destruction/chaos. For example the selling of Joseph into slavery (Gen. 39-46), Daniel in the lion's den (Dan. 1-6) and the crucifixion of Christ (Mark 11-15). Reading the section on the "natural world" in the Social Principles begins to get at some of the destruction of our earth. There is the acid rain, which is rain that falls on polluted air bringing poisonous water to the earth. The plankton, exclusive food of fish and whales, is being destroyed by toxic chemicals; there is a tremendous amount of overfishing. The era of colonialism allowed food growing land in many small

countries to be converted into growing "cash crops" such as coffee, cocoa beans and bananas causing an imbalanced development in many countries. About 80% of the world's resources are being used by about 20% of the world's population, many of whom live in the more industrialized countries such as the United States, Great Britain, France and so on. Degradation of the land is a slow process that happens from overgrazing, by turning grassland into cultivated lands, by cutting or burning forests, by cultivating improperly and by plants species being lost or destroyed. There is toxic pollution caused by oil and fertilizer that is "run-off" from city streets and farmland and a rise in the carbon/toxic air borne substances that destroy the ozone.

We as Christians need to recognize the great value of our natural resources and are called to care for our earth. There are things that are being done and things that we can do. Hope comes in the form of negotiations that periodically occur between the leaders of nations, by reforestation projects that are supported by us, as churches, by the banning and non-use of some harmful non-biodegradable products, by boycotts--not using products produced by companies in violation of the natural order, by land conservation--terraces, contour planting, building rock walls, reclaiming the desert and the ocean floor, by using solar energy and renewable energy and by the United Nations and other agencies who participate in data gathering, world-wide maps of soils potentials and other projects that build up our planet earth.

Divide into six groups. Give each group marking pens and a piece of newsprint upon which is written the six aspects of creation in Genesis 1 (land, vegetation, animals, human beings, atmosphere-air-water, cosmos-sun-stars-firmament). Give the groups 15 minutes to design a poster which will reflect how persons/society express their stewardship of that part of creation listed at the top of their paper. Call the groups together and have one person from each group tape the poster onto the wall and give a short interpretation.

Using the "Care of our natural resources scale" below, give

CARE OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES SCALE

Part of body	Signs of caring for God's creation	Amount of Involvement			
		Not at all	A little	Average	A great deal
Head	Knowing when natural resources are being abused				
Chest	Using natural energy resources wisely				
Trunk	Supporting policies that reduce and control industrial waste				
Right hand/arm	Supporting protective measures for soil, water and plants				
Left hand/arm	Actively support/participate in energy resources utilization				
Right leg/foot	Supporting regulations that protect/preserve animal life				
Left leg and foot	Urge international cooperation in the preservation/appropriate use of natural resources				

each person a copy, a marking pen and a blank paper about 12" by 18". Each person is to do a personal examination using the

chart. Then ask each person to draw/sketch/create a human body; the body should be put together in proportion to the answers on the chart. For example, one may have a very small head (no involvement) and have a big left hand and arm. It all depends upon the answers in the "Amount of Involvement" on the chart.

Close by asking all persons to place their "bodies" in the center of the room on the floor. Form a circle around them. Invite persons to share one word which expresses feelings about the experience. Close with either stating or singing the Doxology:

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heav'nly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.³

Session 3: "What to Do?"

Readings:

Jeremiah 16:1-13

The Nurturing Community

Open the session by discussing the reading in Jeremiah. Jeremiah was a great prophet of the Old Testament. His book is a mixture of history, biography and prophecy; the book portrays a nation in crisis and the inner torture of a prophet who had to confront and challenge this nation. Jeremiah's

³"Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow," The Book of Hymns (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1966), No. 809.

call is in Chapter 1:6-9, his cry to the people 7:1-4, his cry to the royalty 13:18-19 and his lament and sorrow 15:17-18. In Chapter 16:1-13, Jeremiah's life is a symbol; the prophet's celibacy and austerity is a sign to the people of the coming destruction. It was very unusual for one to be celibate at this period in history. Jeremiah had a single cause, to warn the people: our children will die and we will be hurled out of the land. There is faithlessness and people are not helping other people. Verses 6 and 7 give insight into the mourning customs at the time, self-laceration and shaving of head which was forbidden by the book of Deuteronomy, however the Hebrews apparently practiced such rites at this time. In verse 7, the cup and bread is reminiscent of 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 in the New Testament. The ending of this section, Jeremiah 31:31-33, is very clear about the reason for exile; God's law will be put within each person, written upon each heart!

Read the following to bring participants in focus with what the nurturing community may be today:

BE GENTLE

Be gentle with one another--
 The cry comes out of the hurting heart of humanity,
 It comes from the lives of those battered with
 thoughtless words
 And brutal deeds;
 It comes from the lips of those who speak them,
 And the lives of those who do them,
 Be gentle with one another--

Who of us can look inside another and know what is there,
 Of hope and hurt, or promise and pain?
 Who can know from what far places each has come
 Or to what far places each may hope to go?

Our lives are like fragile eggs--
 They are brittle--
 They crack and the substance escapes--
 Handle with care!

Handle with exceeding, tender care for there are human beings
 within
 Human beings vulnerable as we are vulnerable;
 Who feel as we feel,
 Who hurt as we hurt.

Life is too transient to be cruel with one another,
 It is too short for thoughtlessness,
 Too brief for hurting.
 Life is long enough for caring,
 It is lasting enough for sharing,
 Precious enough for love.⁴
 Be gentle with one another.

(The Reverend Richard S. Gilbert, Rochester, New York)

A very important aspect in the nurturing community is the decision-making process. Some ways of making decisions are better than others and lend themselves to unity, justice, and community building. Probably it is best when people respectfully listen and respond to the needs and wants of others, and care enough about each other to take the time to work at a genuine agreement. Let the group turn attention to how small family groups may make decisions. Divide into groups of 3 or 4 and each group discuss the various methods that small family groups may make decisions. Have them briefly talk about how the methods may work, that is, outcomes both positive and negative and examine feelings, reactions, inner dynamics and possible long-term results of different age family group members. Come together after 15 minutes and have each

⁴ Kathleen E. Madigan and William J. Sullivan, Crime and Community in Biblical Perspective (Valley Forge: Judson, 1980).

group share at least one method; after each group has shared some may have second examples that are different. Some examples may be: "the plop" where all talk but none really listen; "the railroad" where a few members push through a decision; "total agreement" where some are afraid to say what they really think; "the boss" where one person decides; "the terrible question" where problems arise that are so emotional that they go unresolved by the family group; "the vote" where the majority rules; or "the consensus" where conversation continues until all feel unity.⁵

After about 30 minutes of sharing, have the same groups reconvene and have each design a hypothetical problem that may come up to confront a family group situation. (Remember, a family group may be those living together in a boarding house, a nuclear family, an extended family living together, several individuals sharing apartments in a small building or similar situation). Each group has 10 minutes to design a problem and write it down. The leader will then collect the problems and give them to other groups for solving. Have each group follow the format below in their problem-solving process:

Step 1: Name the problem-listen and share with each other to decide what to do.

Step 2: Brainstorm alternatives.

Step 3: Evaluate the alternatives.

⁵ "Try This: Family Adventures Toward Shalom" created by the Ecumenical Task Force on Christian Education for World Peace (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1979).

Step 4: Poll the group to see if you have found an alternative that everyone can accept.

Step 5: Decide how to implement the solution. Who will be responsible for which tasks, and when will we evaluate how well your action is working.

Allow 20 minutes for this procedure and have the group reconvene. If there is time, share the experience. Close with the following litany:

LITANY ON A NURTURING COMMUNITY

Leader: Those who have ears to hear, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. (Revelation 3:22)

RESPONSE: LORD, HELP US TO HEAR.

Leader: Remind us that we are all your children. Help us to affirm one another's dignity.

RESPONSE: LORD, HELP US TO CARE.

Leader: Make us mindful of others in our family group: our peers, those who may be younger, those who may be older, those who may be handicapped, those who may have a different life style.

RESPONSE: LORD, HELP US TO KEEP YOUR COVENANT.

Leader: Each of us has some gift to share.

RESPONSE: LORD, HELP US TO GIVE AND RECEIVE FREELY.

Leader: Make us mindful of those things which divide our community--greed, agism, abortion, divorce, racism, inequality, sexism, religion.

RESPONSE: LORD, HELP US TO MEND.

Leader: There are many divisions within our nurturing community.

RESPONSE: LORD, HELP US TO REMEMBER THAT WE ARE THE CHURCH.

Leader: We live in a society where there is conflict and violence.

RESPONSE: LORD, HELP US TO BE RECONCILIERS, TO HEAL WOUNDS, TO CONTINUE TO BUILD COMMUNITY.

ALL: LET US COMMIT OURSELVES TO MAKING OF THIS GROUP A NURTURING COMMUNITY, BEING ALERT TO THOSE SITUATIONS IN WHICH RECONCILIATION IS NEEDED. LET US HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO US AND HELP US TO BRING PEACE AND LOVE TO OTHERS IN THE WORLD.

Session 4: "Power in Me!"

Readings:

John 4:1-42

The Nurturing Community

The location of John's baptizing in Samaria (3:23) provides the link that leads to Jesus' mission of self-revelation to the Samaritans. Chapter 4 in John is a discourse between Jesus and a Samaritan woman and a transition in life unfolds for her during the process.

Meet in groups of three to discuss the dialogue briefly noted below and the questions that follow. Suggest each group use about 10 minutes to review the dialogue and 15 minutes to discuss the questions.

the Samaritan woman

How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?

Sir, you have nothing to draw with where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob?

Sir, give this water that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.

I have no husband.

Sir, I perceive you a prophet . . . where men ought to pray?

Jesus

Give me a drink.

If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you . . . you would have asked him . . . he would have given you living water.

Everyone who . . . thirst . . . I shall give . . . never thirst . . . to eternal life.

Go, call your husband.

You are right.

the Samaritan womanJesus

Woman, you will know
true worship.
The hour . . . coming
God is spirit.

I know . . . messiah coming

I speak to you . . . am he.

If we regard Jesus as a nurturing person, what can we learn from Jesus' action to pass through Samaria? (Samaria was a hostile place for Jews.)

Compare Jesus' approach with the woman's reaction in order to figure out an appropriate attitude with which to nurture another person.

Were there important differences between the woman's request from Jesus in terms of her need and Jesus' understanding of her fundamental need?

What was the woman's basic problem and how did Jesus confront this basic problem? (The regular time for women to draw water was very early in the morning before it became hot.)

What is the ultimate answer Jesus would like to give to her? How did Jesus give this message to her?

Think about this woman's social conditions which caused her to have her view of religion, the defensive human relationship, ethnic prejudice and sexual abuse. How did Jesus deal with these conditions in order to liberate her spiritually, morally, and practically?

Have the group come together and share ideas as to how Jesus was a nurturing person in this story of the Samaritan woman.

There are powerful dynamics that go on in the process of being a nurturing person and the next 45 minutes will allow each participant to practice that role. Divide into the same groups of three persons and each person will have a chance to try out the roles of presenter, nurturing person, and reporter. Ten minutes will be allowed for presenter and the nurturing person to talk together; the reporter observes and may take notes. Five minutes will then be allowed for the

reporter to share observations and for the other two to give feedback on their feelings. Focus on the nurturing that was being done during the process. The facilitator should keep close track of time, announcing the ten and five minute periods and making sure that at the end of each 15 minute period the three persons switch roles. Following are brief "job descriptions":

Presenter's job . . . describe a concern, decision or issue as clearly, briefly and succinctly as possible.
 Nurturing person's job . . . assist the conversation by clarifying, identifying alternatives and options (not giving one solution), locating resources or helping plan steps of action. Reporter's job . . . LISTEN to what is being said and what is going on between the two; what is helpful and unhelpful; what nurturing is going on between the two.

Convene the whole group again and ask their feelings about the exercise and what did they learn in the process. Suggest that these roles may be helpful to our meetings in the future and perhaps in their interactions with others. Have printed on a poster the following and close by reading it together.

TOGETHER

In the midst of another
 occasions a realm of possibilities.

A chance to show love in a variety of ways,
 Make merriment with very little effort,
 Experiment in the depth of human understanding,
 Cooperate in the spirit of partnership,
 Be honest without fear of failure or insult,
 Communicate to the utmost of capacity,
 Think and ponder the revelations in life,
 Help to grow by encouragement and praise,
 Value you because of who you are as a person.

To be with you, you with me
 The two of us, giving and sharing together.

Judy Flanegin

Session 5: "A People on the Move"

Readings:

Deuteronomy 26:5-11
The Social Community

Discuss the story of a people on the move in the Biblical assignment. This is one of two extremely important themes in the Old Testament. It is looked upon as a type of confession of faith because it is repeated a number of times throughout the Bible, not necessarily in the same words, but most definitely the idea of the statement of a faith of historical ancestors. It is one that probably the Israelite farmers repeated as they would come to the harvest festival in Jerusalem bringing their produce from the fields. It was a statement not only rich in history but one that continually professed God's love to humanity, God's love for each and every person, irrespective of their status in life. The second theme was one that left no doubt as to God's love for all:

God is my shepherd:

I shall lack nothing;

God lets me lie down on green grass,
leads me by quiet streams, and
makes me a new person.

God guides me along the right path
because this is the way of the Divine;
when I go through the pits of life and living
nothing frightens me.

You are with me,
grace and courage for all times
making me strong!

You are my host, I am your guest
while my enemies look helplessly on!
You bathe my head with oil,
fill my cup to the top!

Your goodness and love shall come with me
all my days!
God's home is my home
forever!

God's love was thus not one of defeat, but a real conviction coming from a long history of being with the Hebrew people. God was with the people from all walks of life, rich and poor; all knew the nature of God's steadfast love.

This is an exercise that will hopefully help participants examine their viewpoints on controversial subjects and to experience what is involved in appreciating another's point of view on the same subject. Another purpose is to surface the dynamics of prejudice, biases, perception, preconditioning, and stereotyping. Make it very clear to the participants that a stand one way or the other on an issue may not necessarily be "wrong" or "sinful" but the important ingredient is to focus on "What do I hear?" and "What am I saying?" At this time it would probably be a good time to address the concept of confidentiality. This may not be the exact time to do this, but the facilitator will need to mention that there are things that we share with one another that others trust in us not to share. It is an honor to be trusted with private information but it is also a responsibility in protecting certain information. If there is any doubt, before sharing about another person, then that person should be asked for the privilege.

Have the participants pair off and discuss some social issue that would be controversial for them such as amnesty,

drug use, women's rights, euthanasia, sterilization, poverty, medical experimentation, plight of the farmer or some local issue. The participants are to discuss one issue in this manner: After one partner "A" expresses an opinion either pro or con, the other partner "B" must restate the sense of that opinion to partner "A's" satisfaction. The purpose is to demonstrate that partner "B" was listening and understood what "A" was trying to communicate. The next partner, "B", states an opinion on the issue, "A" restates the sense of that opinion, and they continue discussing the issue in this manner. Questions may be asked, but they too, must be restated by the other partner to assure that the listener understands. After 10 minutes, call the group together and address any problems the diads may have had and to share the feelings of the experience. Now introduce another controversial topic, the draft vs. an all volunteer army, legalizing marijuana or some other controlled drug, the nuclear arms race, government vs. private support for the mentally ill, mandatory retirement, equal rights, religious rights or name your own. Announce that you would like for about half of the group to speak for one side of the issue and the other members to speak for the opposing side. Have those for an issue stand (hopefully it will be about half of the group) then have them pair up with another that has an opposing viewpoint to discuss the issue. They do not need to repeat for clarification however, remind the participants that the purpose is not to disagree, but to try to listen to what each other is saying

and to understand what they are saying.⁶ After 15 minutes reconvene the group and have each one speak to "What new insight did you discover by listening to the other person?" Hopefully this exercise will help participants begin to see and feel how some other people in our community and society may be different. It may begin to uncover some of the reasons for the differences and bring insights on possibilities for ministry. Perhaps there are ways we can better understand our brothers and sisters in this world.

Remind the group about the confession of faith, one used by all people, old and young, strong and weak, rich and poor. This is a statement that is repeated many times in the Old Testament, often with different wording. This confession is a ritual. Acts that we do today can also be called rituals, and many of them as pointed out by Neville have religious significance.⁷ A ritual is a rite of passage or a life crisis ceremony that has three components: (1) incorporation into a new social group, (2) initiation into a new social status and (3) celebration or a ceremony for gathering. (Getting a first driver's license is a secular example.) Have the group discuss different rituals that have religious significance. Suggestions may include baptism, marriage, family gatherings, a tradition of gift-giving, church annual gatherings and so on. It may be interesting to note which rituals may be

⁶ Adapted from Thomas P. Fenton, ed., Education for Justice (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis), 1975.

⁷ Gwen Kennedy Neville and John H. Westerhoff, III,

celebrated by all peoples and which ones may be limited to certain segments of population. What may be advantages and/or disadvantages of the different rituals. Do rituals uphold all persons as being of equal value?

To close, read the first paragraph of the Social Community and end with prayer. Ask the group members to make notes during the week of examples they see or experience that encourage or discourage other human beings.

Session 6: "Who Are We?"

Readings:

Ephesians 4:7-16
The Social Community

Read the scripture aloud to open the session and entertain comments relative to the gifts of Christ. Have each person reflect on their lists made during the weeks of ways they saw or were personally encouraged or discouraged. Go around the room and have each share how they feel "we" could help each other in society.

There are a number of different communities that are addressed in the "Social Community," ethnic and religious minorities, children, youth, seniors, women, the handicapped, rural dwellers, urban dwellers and so on. The next exercise is an activity to help us begin to look at our own attitudes, our behavior, the things we do and the choices we make about the kind of environment in which we live. This particular

Learning Through Liturgy (New York: Seabury, 1978).

exercise addresses teenagers, however, the same kind of process may be done addressing another population, for example, the aging, ethnic minorities, the handicapped, alcoholics, religious minorities and so on.

Take 15 minutes to do a personal examination of prejudice.⁸ In groups of two, list at least three or more attitudes or beliefs that you consider to be examples of prejudice about teenagers. (Note: These do not need to be personal beliefs.) Also list three or more ways you could change or challenge those attitudes. List one thing you could do that might bring about a change in attitude. Each group of two, then join another group of two to share about these personal examinations. After 10 minutes, reorganize and ask the participants to focus on an individual activity. Think about an experience in the past that changed your attitude toward a certain group of young people. Note the incident and write down your feelings before and your feelings after the particular experience. Take about 5-7 minutes; for those who finish, ask them to note whether a similar incident may be possible today for them or for their loved ones. Return to the original groups of four and share about the experiences involving attitude change. Ask each person to spend about five minutes, so that all members of each group may have a chance to share.

After 20 minutes, bring the whole group back together. Entertain sharing relative to prejudice and how attitude

⁸ Kathleen and James McGinnis, Parenting for Peace and Justice (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1981).

change has happened in our lives. Encourage each person to share a thought on the subject. In thinking of these personal experiences, address the issue of how detrimental prejudice in our society may be changed. Culminate the discussion in 30 minutes, after each person has shared.

The next exercise is a cradling experience and is designed to encourage a deeper respect for life and a focusing on the powers that are innate in each person.⁹ Ask participants to pair up with another person, one they know fairly well and to sit next to them. The person on the right should close their eyes as the person on the left lifts their partner's arm and hand so that the elbow is held in one hand and the hand in the other hand. Read the following somewhat slowly and in a normal relaxed voice: "Cradle the arm and hand, feel the weight of it . . . flex the elbow around, noting how the joints are hinged to permit variety of movement . . . look as if you had never seen it before, as if you were a visitor from another world . . . observe the integration of bone and muscle . . . turn the palm and fingers, note the extraordinary intricacy of their inner structure . . . what you now hold is an object unique in our cosmos: it is a human hand of planet Earth . . . Note the opposable thumb, how clever and adept it is . . . good for grasping a tool, a pen, a gun . . . open your awareness to the journey it has made in this lifetime . . . how it opened like a flower

⁹ Adapted from Joanna Rogers Macy, Despair and Personal Power in the Nuclear Age (Philadelphia: New Society Pub., 1983).

when it emerged from the birth canal . . . how it reached out to explore and to do . . . that hand learned to hold a spoon . . . to tie shoelaces . . . to throw a ball . . . to write its name . . . to give pleasure . . . to wipe tears There is nothing like it in all the universe." Now gently put the hand and arm to rest on the arm of the chair and stand and move to behind where your partner is sitting. Put your hand on the back of your partner's head and feel the weight of your partner's head in your hand. Keep your neck relaxed and let it be held by your partner. "Cradle the head with reverence, for what you now hold in your hands is the most intricate, complex object in the universe . . . a human head of planet Earth . . . a hundred billion neurons firing in there . . . vast potential for intelligence . . . only a portion has been tapped of that capacity to see, to know, to vision, to create . . . it is the center of all one may be able to do and has done in the journey of life . . . walking, running, climbing, kicking a ball, pedaling a bike . . . it opens thoughts to many places one has been and many experiences that are memories in a storehouse of infinite capacity . . . in that head too are dreams of what could be, visions that could shape our world and guide us . . . very carefully and very gently raise your partner's head, this very precious and valuable part of human life."

At this time have the same partners reverse their roles. The person on the left should close their eyes as the person on the right lifts their partner's arm and hand so that the

elbow is held in one hand and the hand in the other hand.
Read the following: "Cradle the arm and hand, feel the life in it . . . note also its vulnerability . . . no shell encases it, for those fingertips, that palm, are instruments for sensing and knowing our world, as well as for doing . . . move the hand in your hand, a flexible, fragile hand, so easy to crush or burn . . . be aware of how much you want it to stay whole . . . it has tasks to do, some that we do not even know . . . reaching out to people in confusion and distress, helping, comforting, showing the way . . . this hand may hold you in a moment of trouble and confusion . . . may give you a drink of water or a touch of reassurance . . . with gratitude for its existence, put it gently down." Now move to behind where your partner is sitting and put your hand on the back of their head and feel the weight of your partner's head in your hand. "Within that skull is a whole world of experience, memories, learning, thoughts, scenes and songs, beloved faces . . . all living still in the mansions of that mind . . . it is a world of experience that is totally unique and one that can never be fully shared . . . in that head too are dreams of what may come in the future and anticipations that shape our world and guide us . . . be aware of this complex, intricate object and to the choices it will make . . . the places that it will go and the missions that it will be a part of . . . to serve, to guide and to nurture others . . . a vast potential for love and for intelligence . . . very gently raise your partner's head,

allowing the neck muscles to resume control."

Either in groups of four or as a whole group, discuss the experience pointing out the uniqueness of each individual, of each person's past history, of the intricacy and beauty and wonder of each person; also mention the universality of all people and how we are like other human beings on this planet earth and the vulnerability that we all share in common.

At this point in the study, the time together for the group is half completed. This is an excellent time to evaluate the class experiences, perhaps giving suggestions as to making the sessions more meaningful in the future. Have each participant respond briefly to the following questions:

1. Have the materials encouraged working on the tasks at hand in cooperation with others?
2. How do you sense a feeling of accomplishment and responsible participation?
3. Have others been sensitive to and aware of your ideas and feelings?
4. Do you feel group members are developing a sense of group trust and mutual respect?
5. Are you being nurtured and equipped to live a life of faith and to live as a responsible Christian in today's world?
6. What suggestions do you have for the sessions.

Participants may sign their evaluations if they so desire; keep the information that is collected in confidence and thank the group members for their honest opinions.

In closing, read again Ephesians 4:15-16.

Session 7: "Power!?!"

Readings:

2 Samuel 6:1-19

The Economic Community

King David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem to build religious strength in the city as well as military strength. The event was described by the scripture reading. The Ark was brought in with shouts of joy and great festivity. As the Ark approached the city gates, the excitement of the people broke into singing: Psalm 27:7-10. At this time, Jerusalem was selected as the royal capital too. This move greatly facilitated the unification of the kingdom which happened under the reign of David. With Jerusalem being both the political and religious center of the country, a long-lasting hereditary dynasty was begun. David renamed it "the city of David" and worked to establish a strong center in government and in worship for all of Israel. Jerusalem today still ranks among the great symbol cities of all times.

The last few weeks we have taken a closer look at our own lives and at those with whom we interact daily or perhaps frequently. The next sessions are planned to expand our horizon into the economic, political and world communities. Today, as in the day of King David, there are economic centers of great strength; we as United Methodists have made some definitive statements relative to the economic community. Divide up into groups of two and have each share the material in Section IV of the Social Principals

as follows: introductory paragraph, property, collective bargaining, work and leisure, consumption, poverty, migrant workers, and gambling. Ask that one person in each group report back on the content of information after 10 minutes of study and discussion. If there are not enough groups of two to cover the paragraphs, ask if one or more groups will volunteer to cover two paragraphs. An additional five minutes may have to be allowed for discussion, then convene the group. Reiterate the opening statement that "we claim all economic systems to be under the judgment of God no less than other facets of the created order" and that emphasis for us as a church is on responsibility and accountability. The intent is not to cover all segments of our economic community nor to condone or criticize any specific component. The aim is to follow the call of Jesus Christ to do what is just and what is right.

Conclude the discussion in about thirty minutes. To introduce the next exercise read 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 and announce that we are going to do some actual participation in the ministry of reconciliation in a simulated experiment. The goal will be to formulate some new responses to problems that may come from economic systems that are in society. This is the information you have: The following group has been commissioned to explore and inhabit a newly discovered planet that is similar to earth. They do not have a way to return to earth, however there is a strong possibility that others may join them from earth at some time in the future.

They have just landed. Sam, a union president; Linda, manager of a wholesale grocery chain; Kim, a welfare recipient; Carol, a physician; Bob, a farmer; Sara, an engineer; Larry, a clergyperson; Jim a migrant worker; George a politician; Sue, a nursing mother with infant; Bill, an architect and Sue's husband; and Sharon, a corporation president. If there are not enough "characters" then others may be assigned to represent other economic groups in our society for example teacher, factory worker, banker, department store executive and so on. The food supply on the planet seems to be plentiful with wild berries, some fruits, animals and the land appears to be most productive. There are special foods they have brought with them, actually enough to sustain the group of thirteen for about nine months until crops may be harvested. Establish a system for sharing the rations that will be equitable and that will make them last as long as possible. You have 15 minutes to make the role play name assignments and to set up a plan for distributing the rations.

After one month, it is discovered that the supply of rations is diminishing more rapidly than it would if everyone were taking only her or his share. A meeting is called to consider the situation. Some additional information of possibilities may exist. Perhaps Sue believed the group decision to share the rations was fair, but that she needed more than she was allowed because of the baby. George had always been an extremely nice guy to everyone who knew him and he seemed to always get those things that he desired or

promoted; in short he was not at all accustomed to doing without. Bob was very interested in experimenting with trying to grow some of the seed rations that were brought and he felt that if successful, these would be an additional benefit if indeed they did grow and produce; these were of a different variety than those brought specifically for the purpose of planting. Before the exercise continues, remind participants that perhaps there may be another solution rather than punishment when conflict occurs and that taking into consideration the context of the situation and the needs of the individuals involved may be important. Decide what action should be taken if it is discovered that a member or members of the group is/are responsible for the disappearance of the rations. The group has 15 minutes to discuss the situation with the new information you have been given and decide what action should be taken. Perhaps the resources on the planet may be a factor in your decision making. You have a unique opportunity to create a process which will foster the inclusion of the offenders into the community, to promote economic justice for all, and to restore the group's broken covenant.

After a couple weeks, Sue (the mother) and George (the politician) confess to taking more rations than allowed in the agreement. Sue was so concerned about her baby that she felt she would do almost anything to maintain its health. George had never experienced being hungry and it go to the point where he could just no longer tolerate the discomfort. Sharon (the corporation president) was caught taking extra

rations. She was working with Bob in building what she thought would be a secure position in the community in the future. Discuss the consequences of applying to these three or four people the actions previously decided upon. You have fifteen minutes. Under the circumstances, do any changes need to be made? Do the actions take into consideration the needs of all, the offenders, the victims, the group as a whole? Does it contribute to the growth of all persons and help to make the group stronger for the future?

Close the session by spontaneously mentioning the various job holders in our economy today; pray for all of us to follow the call of the Christ in our lives and to do what is just and what is right.

Session 8: "What is to Serve?"

Readings:

Luke 10:36-42

The Economic Community

Read the scripture and entertain any discussion. What is it to be the church to others? How do we love God and how do we love our neighbor? Jesus was on a journey and he stopped to see his friends. Think about Mary and Martha's understanding about ultimate concerns and priorities. What was the message of Jesus to Mary and Martha and what is his message for us today? Take about fifteen to twenty minutes to have a meaningful discussion, making sure all participants contribute to the conversation.

The next part of our time together is going to be spent

going on a trip together. In fact, each of you will be taking the others to any place of your choice. Close your eyes and think about a place you would like to take everyone. Perhaps it is some place where you have been and you have favorite memories or perhaps it is a place you have read about or heard about through some media or friends who have been there. It may be only a short distance away . . . we could go by walking or by car or train. Maybe it is far away and we would need to fly on an airplane or take a ship. Take a few moments to decide just exactly where you will take us. (pause) Now think about our traveling to get to this very special place you have chosen. Visualize how we are going, who we may see en route and the things we may be taking with us. What responses will our friends with us have as we reach our travel destination and what will be the first things we will be doing together. (pause) Now concentrate on where you have taken us. If it is a one day trip, perhaps our time together will have more focus. If we are staying a few days or a week or so then there may be more places for us to visit. Think about those persons with whom you have contact and interact on this trip. Are they like yourself or are they different? How are they the same or how are they different? Do they have the same opportunities that you have? What may be their economic advantages and disadvantages? Are they happy? In silence think about our experiences together. (a longer pause) And now it is time for us to return home. Say any final closing words that you may need

to say or any final preparations you may need to make.

(pause) Let us all be on our way home and soon you will bring us all back to our circle of sharing right here in this room. As soon as we are back, open your eyes and remain in silence for a few minutes.

Explain that the next hour will be spent sharing the travel experiences. Try to divide the time so that each person will have about the same amount of time to share. It is important that each person share; a trip to a beautiful nearby park is just as important as a trip to Tahiti when it comes to sharing experiences. Try to bring out what was happening with people, be it individuals in the group or other people seen or that came in contact with the group through the traveling. Were they happy, sad, of help to others, in need of others? Were they respected and treated as children of God, receiving their fair share of the earth's resources?

We too, are on a journey. We are taking a closer look at what we as United Methodist's believe and how we as the church can respond to need in our community, in our nation and in our world. Being concerned about our economic community needs to move beyond just study to some kind of action. This may be caring for victims, providing a direct service, or it may mean working with victims and with others to change the situations and institutions that victimize them. Discuss the following types of direct service and suggestions of working to bring about social change. Some

of these or others participants may suggest, may be potential opportunities for your church to be in ministry in the future.

Caring through direct services:

- Tutoring children and youth
- Prison ministry
- Food pantries
- Food boxes/food collection and distribution
- Transportation for the disabled or elderly
- Providing meals at community centers or missions
- Sponsor fund-raising events for local or foreign mission
- Clothing centers
- Meals for shut-ins
- Hospitality houses
- Visiting the elderly or shut-ins
- Peer counseling programs

Working for social change:

- Review copies of "Engage/Social Action", General Board of Church and Society, UMC
- Study The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church
- Educating the public on issues
- Challenging practices of corporations contributing to hunger and injustice
- Advocating for relief, development and assistance programs
- Working for full employment
- Starting a food co-op or credit union
- Land reform
- Committee for peace
- Substance abuse programs
- Develop the power of people to make changes for themselves
- Identify other groups working for change and join or support

Some organizations working for economic justice:

Bread for the World (Christian citizens' movement combatting hunger)
802 Rhode Island Ave. N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20018

Worldwatch Institute (scientific research on environmental issues)
1776 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Council on Economic Priorities (studies on military spending, etc.)
84 Fifth Ave.
New York, N. Y. 10011

Campaign for Human Development (helping the poor gain
economic and political strength)
United States Catholic Conference
1312 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

Close the session with prayer.

Session 9: "Who likes Politics, but . . ."

Readings:

1 Kings 12: 6-11 (King Rehoboam's rule with an 'iron hand.')

The Political Community, pp. 17-20 of the Social Principles Pamphlet

Group members gather and share informal discussion of weeks activities and so on. About ten minutes of the hour and one-half session may be used for this purpose. Focus attention on the topic at hand by giving an overview of the seven human issues mentioned in the Social Principles reading assignment. Invite questions or responses on the political community as presented. Encourage participants to share personal stories/experiences relative to the seven issues.

Political unrest and manipulation is reminiscent of the days following the great rule of Kings David and Solomon in the Old Testament. The ending of King Solomon's reign is reported as being full of political unrest and revolts. King Rehoboam is a ringleader in the revolt of the ten tribes of Judah. The young king foolishly disregards the advice of his father, King Solomon's counsel and follows the advice of his young contemporaries which demands much from the people.

We are called to be responsible in our political life and recognize the government as the way our society is

basically ordered. The church rejoices in our system of democracy and encourages full participation of all citizens. Regretfully, there are those who are left out of the decision making process, many by personal choice; voting statistics indicate low voter turn-outs, and there are others who feel there is no hope and withdraw from society. In addition, there are many different opinions as to what is best for our country and there are strong lobbies in the areas of defense, big business, agribusiness, overseas investments, various industries, the mass media and so on. We in the religious community have some very real convictions as to how we, as a nation should be spending money. Let us take a look at our estimated Federal Budget for 1986, 989.6 billion dollars and go on a big shopping expedition.¹⁰ Think about what our values are as a religious body and try to put in the appropriate categories an estimated dollar amount (see study sheet #1).¹¹ Pair up to fill in the dollar amounts to total the 1986 estimated budget. After fifteen minutes, distribute study sheet #2 which has the figures as proposed by our federal government. Have each diad make brief comparisons and then have the group come together and each diad share their decision-making process, the conclusions they decided upon and issues they encountered when comparing their budget with the government budget. Some other things to consider may

¹⁰ U.S. Office of Management and Budget, The United States Budget in Brief, Fiscal Year 1984 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1984), pp. 68-83.

¹¹ Fenton, op. cit., pp. 205-207.

be other countries, our world's raw materials, labor force and natural resources, ecology, human rights, power or the lack of power, culture and so on.

Close the session by reading the following: The goal may be for us to become individuals . . .

who have acquired knowledge relevant to the solution of problems.
 who recognize that the church is concerned for people in our whole world
 who acknowledge God's presence in our lives as a vital force and give witness to that presence.
 who are able to cooperate effectively in the political world while at the same time give witness to our values and convictions.
 who are critical learners, able to evaluate the contributions made by others.
 Who work in terms of our own awareness and our own care and concern for others.¹²

God go with each of us in our struggle to make intelligent choices and to be responsible for those actions. Amen!

Session 10: "In Weakness and in Strength"

Readings:

II Corinthians 11: 21b-12:10 (Being a fool for Christ!)
 The Political Community, pp. 17-20 of the Social Principles

The gathering to share with each other will occupy the first ten minutes of the session. To bring the group to a more centered focus, have participants close their eyes and imagine they are out in the country on a clear evening, alone with the stars radiating an inescapable brilliance of beauty. There is a wondrous, awe-inspiring feeling that comes with the recognition that there are innumerable sparkling bodies

¹² Adapted from: Carl R. Rogers and Barry Stevens, Person to Person: The Problem of Being Human (Lafayette, Calif.: Real People Press, 1967).

that give a wee bit of light to pierce the darkness. This overwhelming sight can be a slow-breaking revelation, to deepen and strengthen religious insight. Just think about the power of God and His Son Jesus Christ. Think about the words of Paul "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the highest heaven . . . and he heard things that cannot be told . . . 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness '" (II Cor. 12: 2,4,9). And Paul responds "I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon humans " (II Cor. 21). And now, in the next few moments of silence, conclude your vision, open your eyes and rejoin the group. Take a few minutes to share feelings, insights, and thoughts during this experience.

At times political problems in the world seem as innuerable as the stars! There are many issues such as human rights, power, education/noneducation, civil rights/injustices, crime, military service, aid exploitation and more. Hunger is a critical world-wide human condition that is brought about by a number of intricately interwoven political issues. All of us are familiar with the problem of hunger, both here in the United States and throughout many parts of the world. This will be our central topic; have each person speak to one of the following issues noting any political interrelationships when possible. Entertain a brief discussion following each presentation. Explain that individuals are not necessarily expected to be "experts" on their topic, but are to serve as

the initiator for conversation. The topics are:

1. A past history of colonialism has left the control of international trade and exchange between nations in the hands of a few dominating wealthy nations.

2. Some countries have been manipulated to allow corporations to use their best farm land to produce crops such as coffee, sugar, cocoa and so on for export to wealthy nations rather grow food for their own people.

3. The potential contribution of women has been ignored in many countries and their traditional status undermined by social, political and economic changes.

4. Especially in the United States, the breakdown of the larger family structure has resulted in many old persons being left alone, poverty-stricken and unable to care for themselves.

5. Federal programs in the United States to alleviate hunger and malnutrition have all too often been motivated by corporate and political self-interest as opposed to genuine attempts to eliminate hunger.

6. Systematic discrimination against some ethnic and racial minorities has been so institutionalized that there are few opportunities for self-development.

7. Natural resources are relinquished in favor of commercial products which may be very expensive, unsanitary, inappropriate and even lethal.

8. Some nations spend so much money for arms they cannot afford to develop their economic potentials such as

agriculture, human resources, etc.

9. "Aid" from wealthy countries is many times designed to develop and protect markets of the wealthy countries, not to eradicate poverty in poor countries.

10. Those who know there is enough food do not seem to care enough to work toward ending hunger.

11. Aid from wealthy countries is given to establish dependency and once poor countries become dependent, their power is greatly diminished.

12. Lack of employment opportunities prevents many from gaining the economic resources necessary to purchase the food which is available.

13. Lack of education in food growth technology and utilization causes waste, extravagance and malnutrition.

14. Think of your own local, national or world issue.¹³

To summarize, have each share something they learned in the exercise. In the discussion that follows, try to direct the group in concentrating on new techniques initiated that are producing positive results or suggestions of actions that may help build a better world for all people. What is the call to us as Christians and the church in the world's political community? Read II Cor. 12: 8-10 and close with prayer.

Session 11: "The Gift of Ourselves"

Readings:

Isaiah 55: 1-13 (A hymn of joy and triumph)
The world community, pp. 20-22 of the Social Principles

¹³Adapted from Milo Shannon-Thornberry, The Alternate Celebrations Catalogue (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1982).

After the gathering conversations, read aloud the hymn of Isaiah 55, verses 6-13. God has indeed given us many gifts in which to have joy, peace, singing and growth in new, challenging and exciting ways. Over our past sessions together, we have shared a great deal and touched each other by our words, deeds and actions. Each of us will receive a written gift of presence and this is how we are going to proceed. We will each identify the gifts of affirmation of one person at a time.¹⁴ It is probably best for the group leader/facilitator to begin the process of identifying gifts of affirmation. The person who speaks will then write on a tablet the affirmation of themselves or to another person. For example, John Smith will state one gift he feels he has given to the group; he then briefly notes the gift on the tablet and passes the tablet, pen/pencil and speaking privilege to the person on the right. That person then states a gift they feel John Smith has given to the group and then briefly records the affirmation; the same process is continued until all individuals have affirmed the gifts of John Smith and then he is given his list of affirmations. Continue the same process, gift-giving to each person in the group. The "writing time" will give a minute or two for the next person to decide what to say. Encourage group members to speak directly to each person, referring to them as "you" as

¹⁴ Carr and Carr, Experiment (Leader's Guide), pp. 38-39.

opposed to "what I like about her/him."

Talk for a few minutes about the importance of evaluation of classes and how this can be an important learning tool as well as helping to prepare better for the future. Give each a copy of the study sheet #3 on page 109, "Social Principles Class - Evaluating for the Future" and allow 5 to 7 minutes for each person complete this written evaluation to hand in.

If time remains, share feelings about the exercise. As the next week progresses, ask that participants reflect on the different aspects of the world community mentioned in the Social Principles. Think especially about how these are interconnected to life--the world of work, play, mass media and personal lifestyle. Close by reading Our Social Creed, pp. 22-23 of the Social Principles.

Session 12: "Only the Beginning"

Readings:

Joshua 1: 1-11 (Joshua and the Israelites on the edge of the promised land.)
The World Community, pp. 20-22 of the Social Principles

Joshua and the Israelites standing on the edge of the long awaited promised land surely must have felt an awesome responsibility before God. Another feeling that was probably generated at that time was that of power. The issue of power is vitally connected to our world today and what goes on in our world . . . designation is made between the haves and the have nots. Probably with each of us as a result of our culture and heritage, power is an idea or a notion.¹⁵ Our

¹⁵ Adapted from Macy, pp. 118-119.

view of the world is usually that of reality consisting of separate and discrete entities. Atoms, molecules, cats, dogs, horses, trees and rocks are all separate entities. A common example used to discuss this concept is billard balls. This classification of things or entities are what make up the real world.

There are things that happen between entities such as communications, actions, relationships, stimulants and so on that cannot be measured, thus for many, many years these have been considered less real. Scientifically, it is difficult to measure such feelings as love and hate. Think again of the image of the billard balls and how interactions between them is called "knocking each other around." Domination, then, becomes the measure of power between these entities. Power can be defined in a number of ways: control of another's behavior, capacity to influence another's behavior, capacity to affect another person's rewards and costs, capacity to affect another's goal accomplishment, and the ability to get others to behave in a particular way or to carry out certain actions.¹⁶ And so it is in society, forceful impacts between things can damage, dominate or shatter another. Thus entities build defenses in the form of power so one can continue to exist. Defenses come in many forms such as personality traits, possessions, money, weapons, numbness, bribery and the like.

¹⁶ David and Frank Johnson, Joining Together, Group Theory and Group Skills (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1982), p. 343.

To be powerful is to have strong defenses and creates a power-over situation in which one must "win-over" to "loose out."

In recent times, there has been a dramatic change, in that scientists have discovered that entities are created and sustained by deep interconnections. Things influence each other so radically that often times it is hard to find beginnings and endings. An image that describes these systems is that of a nerve cell or neuron that has outreachings like fingers or small streaks of lightning coming out from the entities. Substances turn to process, where they become flows and currents of energy, matter and information. What years ago seemed like separate entities, gradually become different patterns that sustain each other by means of their relationships and exchanges. Boundaries are only arbitrary distinctions in this force of flowing webs of interconnections.

This is how our own body works, and our family or small community of close friends, there are subsystems within systems. The hunger issue studied in last session is evidence of the interconnections of institutions, systems and human behaviors. If defenses are built around the "neuron systems" as was the case with the billard balls philosophy, then atrophy sets in and the larger system is weakened. The power of a "neuron system" opens one up to the messages and energy flowing through the larger body. Thus the capacity of growth becomes greater for all and power thus can be defined as "power with." It is very interesting to note that democracy in the United States as established over two hundred years

ago is based on this concept of being to, with and for the people. We are becoming more aware of this concept today also because of the crisis effecting the sustenance of our natural resources. We are gradually beginning to see that when our human brothers and sisters are deprived, dispossed and desolate, then all of humanity suffers. It is through our very capacity to feel pain for the world that we can become empowered to connect with it and act to heal it.

We are empowered and we do have gifts to make a difference in our world community. The next part of our time together will be identifying ways we may be able to heal our world and what gifts and talents we have to do that.¹⁷ In diads, discuss the first question below and then we will have the whole group share answers; then move on to the next question repeating the same process until all the questions have been covered.

1. If you had no inhibitions and used all of your talents, what would you do to heal our world?
2. What gifts or resources do you have that would help you accomplish the identified goal?
3. What do you feel you would need in addition to your current gifts and resources?
4. What do you foresee that might be a problem or get in the way of reaching your goal?
5. What is the step that you can take in the next

¹⁷ Macy, p. 143.

twenty-four hours that will help you reach your goal?

Express appreciation to all participants for being a part of this learning and growing experience. Celebrate holy communion as a culmination of the study and as a sending forth. To close read aloud together "Our Social Creed," pp. 22-23 of the Social Principles.

Study sheet #1

1986 ESTIMATED FEDERAL BUDGET - 989.6 BILLION DOLLARS

		Billions of dollars																						
		500	475	450	425	400	375	350	325	300	275	250	225	200	175	150	125	100	75	50	25	0		
MILITARY SPENDING	National Defense																							
	Veterans Benefits																							
	Adm. of Justice Law enforcement																							
HUMAN RESOURCES	Education and Job Training																							
	Health Care																							
	Income Security																							
PHYSICAL RESOURCES	Agriculture and Rural Developm't																							
	Natural Re- sources/Energy																							
	Commerce and Transportation																							
	Community Devel- opment & Housing																							
OTHERS	International Affairs																							
	Space Research and Technology																							
	Gen. Government and Allowances																							
	Revenue Sharing																							
	Interest on Pub- lic Debt/Other																							

1986 ESTIMATED FEDERAL BUDGET - 989.6 BILLION DOLLARS

		Billions of dollars																						
		500	475	450	425	400	375	350	325	300	275	250	225	200	175	150	125	100	75	50	25	0		
MILITARY SPENDING	National Defense								323															
	Veterans Benefits																				27.2			
	Adm. of Justice Law enforcement																				5.5			
HUMAN RESOURCES	Education and Job Training																				24.8			
	Health Care																109.6							
	Income Security								311.4															
PHYSICAL RESOURCES	Agriculture and Rural Developm't																					9.5		
	Natural Re- sources/Energy																				11.5			
	Commerce and Transportation																			29.8				
	Community Devel- opment & Housing																				6.8			
OTHERS	International Affairs																				12.9			
	Space Research and Technology																				7.9			
	Gen. Government and Allowances																				11.8			
	Revenue Sharing																				7.1			
	Interest on Pub- lic Debt/Other																122.7							

Study Sheet #3

Social Principles Class - Evaluating for the Future

Please take a few minutes to briefly respond to the following. Your opinion will be valuable in the future planning, offering and facilitating of this particular class. Do not feel obligated to sign the evaluation. Thanks!

The most helpful things in these sessions were:

The least helpful things in these sessions were:

Particular areas of growth for me were:

Suggestions for future class sessions may be:

As a result of this class in the future I would like to:

An overall general evaluation of this class is: (Please circle One)

Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
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Other comments:

CHAPTER 5

Summary and Conclusion

Problem Restated

A great majority of members in the United Methodist Church are not aware of nor familiar with the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church. These have been formulated over a history of forthright positions on behalf of the church in speaking responsibly to human and ecological issues. The church is in the real world and must always be a part of reality in living day to day. Nouwen speaks to much of the brokenness that exists in the world of people, the world of the church.¹ People are historically dislocated because of complex technological bureaucracy, have flashing impressions of fragmented ideologies and are aimlessly searching for some kind of immortality. Many are ultimately concerned with personal needs and many children and youth have disintegrating adult authority figures which Nouwen feels leads to a "very deep-seated unhappiness" which leads to undirected violence and suicide.² There is also a desperate cry for human response by the ill, by the lonely and isolated, by those in a state of separation and by those seeking meaning in life.

¹ Henri J. M. Nouwen, The Wounded Healer (New York: Image Books, 1972), p. 124.

² Ibid., p. 34.

This is the world of the church and all carry the burden of ministry in this broken world. Nouwen gives insight as to ways leadership in this ministry is done:

For a Christian, Jesus is the man in whom it has indeed become manifest that revolution and conversion cannot be separated in man's search for experiential transcendence. His appearance in our midst has made it undeniably clear that changing the human heart and changing human society are not separate tasks, but are as interconnected as the two beams of the cross.³

This is exactly the kind of change that is evoked and brought about by this study. We can be the church by helping those who are searching to touch the solid core of life. Being compassionate is important, bringing out the best in others and pointing toward a more harmonious future. We each can see good in others and lead them from confusion, inward visions and destructiveness into new creative work and a new vision of hope for the future. To be the church in the world then, is to give personal concern to others, to share the value and meaning of Christian faith and to provide hope for the future as witnessed in these study sessions.

The church as a community of witness, service and life that reconciles and unites people in the grace of God must continue to examine and re-evaluate its structure. Dulles describes five models by which the church may be identified.⁴ First, the church as institution, follows closely the doctrinal,

³ Ibid., p. 20.

⁴ Avery Dulles, Models of the Church (New York: Image Books, 1974), pp. 39-108.

sacramental and governmental structures of historical church tradition finding allegiance in the corporate identity and a continuation of the esteemed religious past. Second, the church as mystical communion, sees the gifts of the Holy Spirit at work in all the people in communion with God. Third, the church as sacramental, preserves official structures, community value and the dimensions of proclamation and world service; the signs of God's grace are seen as operative in the Christian community. Fourth, the church as herald, views faith as a response to proclamation of the Christ event bringing in the saving presence of God. And fifth, the church as servant, creates partnership in those who serve together to be of help to all who are in need. A specific church may be representative of several of these models. Dulles does not advocate strongly for any specific model, he does, however, evaluate the positive and negative components of each model. These models are advantageous in clarifying the role of the church in today's society and giving direction, if taken seriously, for a vision of what the church is to be. "The actual ongoing life of a church, its interaction with the community and interactions among the members generate an identity or character that transcends any rational scheme of planning."⁵ We must be open to the unknown as well as knowing who we are as a social structure utilizing both to give direction in authentic witness and mission to brothers and

⁵ James D. Anderson and Ezra Earl Jones, The Management of Ministry (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), p. 131.

sisters, to community and to the world. This study helps evaluate individual actions and of what the church stands for and does in the world and does so without qualifying as to degrees of right or wrong.

Ministry in the church is action coming forth from the church's meaning of the experience of God in Christ. Holmes states that "meaning is the product of the intersection of the subject with his environment or the objective world" and it consists of images, sign and symbols.⁶ He goes on to list the four essential components of meaning: felt meaning, intuitive meaning, common-sense meaning and thinking (reason plus logic equal concept.) "The plausibility of a symbol or a sign is a function of the environment and the perception of its people."⁷ Thus signs, symbols and images are subject to death, being deflected or being alienated. The meaning then, of God in Christ, must not only bear eternal truth but it must also have strong and relevant meaning to individuals and to the community of faith. "Theologically the 'church' refers to the mystery of Christ as realized in the community of those who believe in him and are assembled in his name."⁸ Christ is the sign par excellence of God's redemptive purpose and must be effectively presented as the sign of God's redemptive love for all of humanity. Dulles presents four meaningful

⁶ Urban T. Holmes, III, Ministry and Imagination (New York: The Seabury Press, 1981), p. 44.

⁷ Ibid., p. 48.

⁸ Dulles, p. 129.

attributes of the sign of Christ.⁹ It must be extended in time so that it becomes definitive and abiding (eschatological). It must be manifested and extended to people of all regions and groups: ethnic and cultural. It must be one that unites all individuals to all humankind. The church then, as a sign of Christ must be characterized by holiness. Meaning in ministry "requires a church that lives in its culture(s) with a sensitivity to those images and their relations to one another that can embody, clarify, and share an international faith--which, in fact, summons us beyond the culture. We must have meaning before we can act effectively, but it must be a plausible meaning.¹⁰ It is from meaning, that the church experiences the mysterious communion with God, builds itself, and reaches out in mission to the world. It is this meaning for which we educate people in the church.

Meaning in the body of Christ lays the foundation for faith development and this in turn compels individuals and the community of faith to reach out into the world with justice and love. The concept of Christian love is extremely important in the Christian faith. Love binds us to God, to other people and to our earth. The Bible shows us the importance of love and especially "love as lived" by Jesus. Jesus says of all the commandments, love of God and love of neighbor are the greatest. Love is that which inspires us to

⁹ Ibid., pp. 138-139.

¹⁰ Holmes, p. 53.

do God's work in the church and to eagerly want to share God's best for all people and everything in the world. We must have faith in God and must have faith working through love. A part of this love is honoring and upholding the dignity of others. A part of this love is being genuine in our actions with others, of rejoicing together and crying together, of living in peace in our families and in our relationships with others in our community and world. It is the kind of love felt when a daughter says to her mother she wants to order the book entitled My Mother Is The Smartest Woman In The World. It is the kind of love felt when a youth gets over the "teenage crazies" and starts relating like a real human being. It is the kind of love felt in coming to work and going to school with people who really care and for whom one cares. This is the kind of love that is fostered by this study of the Social Principles. Christ's love is one that values others and holds our earth in high regard; one that preserves the hardships of our personal lives giving strength and renewal through the grace of God and, is one that remains forever. The Christian fellowship is called to justice. The church is called to acknowledge, critique and formulate action that will be involved in and have a vision for an inclusive community for all of God's creation. This must be done locally, nationally and worldwide.

Participation in a group study such as this one is bringing the mysticism of God into everyday life reality. It is allowing God and the Biblical stories to speak to the

common experiences, the institutions and working systems in the daily lives of individuals, communities, nations and the world. In this, God can also be seen as being a vital part of church history and in the history of humankind. It is one that makes a difference in encouraging peoples to follow the vision of God. Membership in the body of Christ gives to others and shares with others; it sees the human misery and suffering and suffers too, to create a vision of hope. This vision opens doors to racial prejudices, to human degradation and exploitation, land and resource misuse and other injustices in society. It calls for ministry and mission in our everyday life to those near and far. It creates enthusiasm and brings joy in the celebration of Christ and his life for us . . . a Christ that wants good for all humankind. The Christ brings to the death event a celebration of life and eternal peace for the deceased. He brings to the baptism and eucharist a covenant of blessings and a commitment of God's everlasting love for all. This type of a study recognizes the gifts of all humankind and urges the giving of those gifts.

The most important part of the Christian faith is participation in the body of Christ and a participation by the Body in spiritual communion with God. It is recognizing the mark or sign that the grace of God is present with the believing community and loving church and a place where grace is realized and received here on earth. The church, then, is the institutional structure that facilitates worship and

sacraments, education, music, mission, social concerns, evangelism and organizes for the ministry of God's reign here on earth. The Body of Christ is the place where intentional ministry is formulated by peoples working together, critiqued and evaluated by dialogue and experience and reformulated offering new visions of hope. In love, the church reaches out to the nonbelievers and entices them to participate in the Christian fellowship to follow the life of Christ, to rejoice in God's reign in the resurrections and revelations of God and to bring meaning to life right here and now. For life is a precious gift and the Christ that is in each of us must be given today, for all that is known about tomorrow is a vision, and the moment of sharing may be lost.

Evaluation of Thesis Rationale

In respect to the familiarity of United Methodists with the Social Principles it is suspected that few regular church attenders have actually seen or know about the document. In fact, if a survey was taken at a regular administrative meeting of United Methodist leaders, the numbers would probably still be few. This is a very crucial issue as the Discipline states under the section on the meaning of membership "The standards of attitude and conduct set forth in the Social Principles shall be considered as an essential resource for guiding each member of the Church in being a servant of Christ on mission."¹¹ The Social Principles

¹¹ UMC, Book of Discipline, p. 115.

establishes a stance or a character of what it is to be a Christian in the world and to be in ministry in the world. As such, the local churches must be about an intentional, methodical and realistic program of guiding persons toward a better understanding of the Social Principles, the foundation of what it is to be a Christian in the world and to be the church in the world.

It is the rationale of this project that ministry in the church must be done from a wholistic model, of keeping in mind the metaphors "to replenish, to tame, to manage, to till and keep," and utilizing these as applicable in ministering to persons in all of life. This model would serve for ministry to self and to others, for clergy and lay persons and for professionals and those untrained in pastoral ministry.

The departmentalization in disciplines of study and fragmentation in society has resulted from a number of influences in society and of course these schisms have influenced the church. Strong influence comes from the principle of the duality of mind and matter, from the theory of evolution and from the ascription of misplaced concreteness. Revolutionary advances have been made in all areas of technology and science that far exceed the human concept and understanding. Much work has been done in systematizing the laws of nature with little respect to the immediate psychological experiences of humans nor to the organic unity of the whole of creation. Materialism, in many instances at all costs, has also greatly influenced our society.

The church, as being a microcosm of society, has been greatly influenced and formulated by the advancements and developments in society as a whole. The schisms are probably an indication of the dogma and dualism that have greatly impacted our institutions and departmentalizing and systematizing has led to the same developments in church theology and models for ministry. God, as revealed in Jesus Christ, is in all of life and the church must witness to the whole of life of individuals. Education in the church, can not be fragmented or departmentalized, but must be a viable, intentional, inclusive aspect in the whole of church ministry. This is best done from the model of "love" as exemplified in Christ and must be done with the mandatory, unquestionable, persuasive intensity of the prophets of the Old Testament.

Religious truths are meanings which flow from the nature of things. They have to be known, synthesized into understanding, emotionalized, and applied to the interpretation of life. The inspiration of religion lies in the history/ tradition of religion and in the primary expressions of the intuitions of persons. Persuasion is an important factor in inspiring the intuition and is probably facilitated best through that which individuals are most familiar, the "everyday" kind of things that happen when people spend time together in work, study and interaction. Expression of intuition, then becomes an outward sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Self-identification and self-expression then, are the fundamental aims of education, and these must flow from knowing God in all

creation and knowing God as a total part of life.

The wholistic approach to ministry has strong implications for education in the church. In a number of ways, Baxter provides a model for this kind of ministry.¹² His actions portray involvement with parishioners of all age levels and in all "walks" of life. Baxter exhibits a burning conviction to share the Gospel of Christ and to minister with people not only in the church facility but in homes and to their lives with practical and lifelike application. For Baxter, education, theology, counseling, evangelism, mission, etc., are all interrelated and naturally flow from the model of being a Christian in the world. Personal life and spiritual growth for Baxter is also approached wholistically from both religious and worldly discipline viewpoints and with a most purposeful intentionality. Ministry has to be done with people and with meaning, in that ideas must be related to sense perceptions, mental activities and present reality. Propositions and theoretical ideas should find important application in life in order to impact an intimate sense for the truth, beauty and goodness to which God calls. Baxter's model builds religious character in the whole of the persons, the pastor, in each individual parishioner and in the whole of the church.

¹² Richard Baxter, The Reformed Pastor: A Pattern for Personal Growth and Ministry (reprint ed., Edinburgh, Scotland: Banner of Truth Trust Publications, 1974).

Westerhoff also states that the church must include and integrate polarities in the world.¹³ Those he mentions are community-identity-nurture, growth-survival, social-political-economic actions, continuous institutional reform and personal conversions. He affirms catechesis as being a life-long process that must include a shared story, vision and common life, transformation and incorporation and also understanding of the realities and needs of people in their everyday lives. Neville also affirms the importance of life as lived by lifting up the spiritual/religious significance in social and cultural events and liturgy embedded in the societies of North Britain and frontier America.¹⁴ This study strongly supports the importance and value in the continuation of traditions in liturgy as intertwined with beliefs and values. We must be sensitive to the facts of humanness and to the delicacy of the existing patterns of social and cultural arrangements.¹⁵ For ministry this suggests that change comes slowly and that work to change the habits of a dualistic, materialist, segmented culture will be a slow and difficult process. It also suggests for those of us who frequently move to different churches, that liturgies and cultural traditions may be valuable aspects that need to be respected and treasured.

¹³ John H. Westerhoff, III and O.C. Edwards, Jr., A Faithful Church: Issues in the History of Catechesis. (Wilton, Conn.: Morehouse-Barlow, 1981), p. 269.

¹⁴ Neville and Westerhoff.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 173-174.

Browning and Reed also address some viable issues that have not been included in a wholistic ministry.¹⁶ In the chapter on "penance: the sacrament of confession and reconciliation" it is noted that the general confession in corporate worship of Protestants, individual confession of Roman Catholics and to some extent pastoral counseling from a secular perspective have not adequately dealt with the dynamics of guilt.¹⁷ They quote Moltmann, who stated that less emphasis on the eschatological has made the church loose site of the Holy Spirit leading us to a future of the liberating presence of Christ.¹⁸ They recommend the sacrament of confession for persons of all ages and it should help persons renew their vision of a loving and merciful God, deal with the reality of sin and be seen as part of the ministry of the whole church. Another issue they feel is not adequately dealt with in the church is illness and death.¹⁹ They advocate that education in illness, health, life and death needs to start very early in life. Cultural values tend to dominate the funeral ritual rather than it being a sacramental celebration of the "rite of passage" from life through death to a new dimension of life. Browning and Reed include many resources for both of these issues. These, too, are the kind of issues that need to be

¹⁶ Robert L. Browning and Roy A. Reed, The Sacraments in Religious Education and Liturgy (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1985).

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 254-266.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 138-253.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 267-289.

shared and dealt with in community, in small groups.

Another trend toward wholistic ministry is the practice of a unified rite of baptism, confirmation and communion.²⁰ This is from the rediscovery of historical traditions, a movement to circumvent further schism in classic conflicts of the three sacraments that developed because they were separate and to recognize the new person, either infant or adult, as a full participant in the ministering community. It is purely obvious that the spontaneous life of a child ministers as much to adults as do adults to children. Browning and Reed mention a number of times the developmental studies of Erikson and faith stages work by Fowler in advocating for a continued religious training program throughout all of life. They specifically mention a confirmation type of class in early teens, late teens and late twenties. Also suggested are a number of recommended studies for persons of middle age. A study of the Social Principles as designed in this project would seem most appropriate for a study of what one believes and what the meaning is of the church in the world. Also significant in the above mentioned studies is the fact that this work is recognition that the church needs to be wholistic in content, inclusive of all ages, and responsive to individuals who are a microcosm of secular society searching for God in life.

Moore lifts up the major task of the church as being that

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 119-137.

of finding our own educational identity which includes recovering the sacred and transcendent dimensions of knowing and understanding.²¹ In affirmation, education needs an identity and this must be a wholistic ministry from a wholistic religious perspective as indicated in the Social Principles and must be to and with a wholistic world. Our declining statistics and our decaying world are important indicators that God is calling us through Jesus Christ, to make a difference. Individuals must be met on the highways and byways of everyday life, must be led toward or through the spiritual dimensions of life and fed the compelling urgency within, to be in community with Christ and with the world.

²¹ Allen J. Moore, "Pastoral Teaching: A Revisionist View," Quarterly Review, 3, no. 3 (Fall 1983).

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These consist of pages:

Appendix: The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist
Church+ Part III Social Principles; 137-155.

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